Migration and Identity in Victor Hernández Cruz's Poetry

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Tämä pro gradu –tutkielma käsittelee identiteetin rakentumista sekä kokemuksia siirtolaisuudesta Puerto Ricossa syntyneen ja New Yorkissa suuren osan elämästään asuneen runoilijan Victor Hernández Cruzin teoksissa. Tutkimuksen aineistona on käytetty Cruzin runoja ja esseitä, joissa toistuvat erityisesti siirtolaisuuteen liittyvät teemat. Cruz palaakin monissa kirjoituksissaan nuoruutensa New Yorkiin, kuitenkin samalla yhdistäen kaupunkikuvauksiin kotisaarensa trooppisia maisemia sekä käyttämänsä kielen että kuvakielen keinoin. Hänen teoksissaan yhdistyvät omaleimaisella tavalla useammat eri kielet ja kulttuurit, varsinkin angloamerikkalainen sekä puertoricolainen kulttuuriperintö, minkä vuoksi myös kirjoituksista välittyvät identiteettikäsitykset ja siirtolaisuuden kokemukset voidaan nähdä ennen kaikkea hybridisinä, liikkuvina sekä moniulotteisina.

Tutkielman alkupuolisko koostuu teoriaosuudesta, jossa esitellään pääpiirteittäin yksilön identiteetin rakentumiselle olennaisia teorioita muun muassa Stuart Hallin sekä Edward Saidin kulttuuri-identiteettiin sekä kansallisidentiteettiin liittyviin näkemyksiin pohjautuen. Myös muita jälkikolonialistisen kirjallisuustieteen, kulttuurintutkimuksen ja siirtolaiskirjallisuuden teorioita sovelletaan varsinkin analyysiosiossa. Tutkielman alussa käsitellään historiallisen ja yhteiskunnallisen kontekstin luomiseksi myös puertoricolaisten siirtolaisten historiaa New Yorkissa, heidän vaikutustaan kaupungin kirjallisuuteen ja taiteeseen sekä Puerto Ricon ja Yhdysvaltojen välistä siirtomaasuhdetta.

Kuten monet muutkin aikalaisistaan, myös Cruz sekoittelee espanjan ja englannin kieliä taidokkaasti teoksissaan. Lisäksi hän usein tarkastelee erityisellä hartaudella New Yorkin rikasta musiikkielämää, joka selvästi on yksi kulttuurisen yhteenkuuluvuuden lähde puertoricolaisten siirtolaisten keskuudessa. Tutkimuksen analyysiosio jakautuukin kolmeen eri aihealueeseen, jotka erityisen voimakkaasti liittyvät identiteettiin sekä siirtolaisuuden kokemuksiin Cruzin runoudessa: paikkaan ja ympäristöön, kieleen sekä musiikkiin. Analyysissa korostuu myös kodin ja kuulumisen tunteen käsitteet sekä kahden maailman välissä elämisen kokemukset, mitkä osaltaan vaikuttavat siirtolaisen joustavan identiteetin rakentumiseen.

Tutkimuksessa havaittiin, että Cruzin teoksista välittyvä identiteettikäsitys noudattelee jälkimodernistisen ajan näkemyksiä pirstaleisesta, moniulotteisesta ja hybridisestä identiteetistä, joka on jatkuvasti altis muutoksille. Cruz haastaa kansallisidentiteetin merkityksen monikulttuurisessa yhteiskunnassa ja teoksista huokuva identiteettikäsitys laajeneekin kohti transnationaalista ja moninaista identiteettiä, jossa yksilöllä on mahdollisuus liikkua joustavasti monen erilaisen identiteetin välillä. Vaikka Cruzin mukaan puertoricolaisten siirtolaisten elämä on monelta osin värittynyt juurettomuuden ja kahden maailman välissä elämisen kokemuksilla, he ovat ehkä juuri siksi kokeilunhaluisia esimerkiksi kirjallisuudessa ja musiikissa. Syntyneet teokset yhdistelevät täten usein vanhaa ja uutta, menneisyyttä ja nykyisyyttä sekä erilaisia tyylilajeja, kieliä ja kulttuureja.

Avainsanat: Identiteetti, kuulumisen tunne, diaspora, siirtolaisuus, Puerto Rico, Yhdysvallat

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1. Introduction

> Exile, displacement, and bilingualism: the constant state of mankind, a source of great commotion and tragedy, and an experience of great revelation.
>
> "Writing Migrations"[1]

One of the most pressing topics in the United States today is the immigration situation, mainly connected to illegal immigrants and the gradual "Latinization" of the country. Although immigration is by no means a novel phenomenon in the USA, as Hall (1992, 307) demonstrates, the demographics have changed so rapidly during the recent decades that many people have not had the time to adapt to the transforming situation. Change often evokes unnecessary fear, and exacerbated by a worldwide recession and the largest refugee crisis in Europe after the Second World War, the attitudes towards immigrants, refugees and other "newcomers" tend to get antagonistic, which is unfortunately apparent in the political discourse of recent times both in Europe and in the United States. In the very core of such migration processes lies the problematic binary of self/other or us/them, which is also a recurring element in postcolonial literature and theory, and in migrant literature, as indicated by for instance Ashcroft et al. (2000, 18-21). This thesis will therefore explore, among other things, the coming together and interaction of the two poles of that binary and how they affect the migrant's experience and her or his identity.

The thesis will discuss a selection of poems and essays by the Puerto Rican born poet Victor Hernández Cruz, who writes vibrant and rhythmic poetry open to various interpretations that often blends cultural influences of his native land Puerto Rico with the metropolitan reality of New York City, where he lived most of his early adult life. Cruz, born in 1949, moved with his family to New York City in early 1950s and received his primary and secondary education there, and he is fluent in both English and Spanish (Axelrod et al. 2012, 394). He published his first collection of poetry, *Snaps*,

[1] Cruz 1997, 129

when he was only eighteen years old and since then he has published various collections, received numerous awards and taught also in different universities such as University of California Berkeley (Axelrod et al. 2012, 394). Reflecting the circular movement of many other participants of the Puerto Rican diaspora, Cruz migrated back to the island to his native town Aguas Buenas in the late 1980s; however, he has returned to New York City, and California, in many of his works (Aparicio 2003, 153-154).

The mixture of cultural references in Cruz's poetry does not restrict itself to the level of meaning and imagery but occurs also in the language that he uses in many of his poems: a creative combination of Spanish and English, or Spanglish. Such blending of the two languages is, according to Carmelo Esterrich (1998, 50), a typical feature of the Nuyorican literary movement. The movement involves a group of poets, artists, musicians and writers either born in Puerto Rico or of Puerto Rican descent, who live in or around New York City and aspire to bring the often marginalized Puerto Rican experience to light. These writers discuss themes like geographical dislocation, cross-cultural encounters, rootlessness and homelessness, foreignness and the migrant experience in general – themes that are particularly common in postcolonial or transnational literature trying to give voice to the marginalized. Moreover, Esterrich (1998, 50) argues that Cruz is one of the leading figures of the Nuyorican literary movement[2], therefore, his work deserves more academic study than it has received.

According to Ashcroft et al. (2000, viii), in our highly-globalized and transnational context, postcolonial studies are presently more and more interested in the idea of borderlands and in the hybrid tendencies of for instance Latino subjects. Axelrod et al. (2012, 298) include Victor Hernández Cruz among what they term "culturally oriented poets", who often write "people-centered poems" that "critique hegemonic assumptions that keep individuals apart or in hierarchical relation to one

[2] Esterrich (1998, 55) also points out how some critics, for instance Eugene Mohr, have set Cruz aside from the Nuyorican movement, as his poetry is supposedly too experimental, "pure verbal abstraction", and not political enough. However, today with the support of figures such as Frances Aparicio, Cruz's position in the Nuyorican tradition is more generally accepted.

another". They write about difference "within society, and even within the self", setting a conversation for the self and the other (Axelrod et al. 2012, 298). Cruz's poetry often discusses such complexities of culture and identity in representing migrant experience and identity, and so this thesis will look at a variety of Cruz's poetry and some of his essays in the framework of postcolonial criticism. The criticism will include cultural studies, Latino studies, and literary theory, especially on Nuyorican migrant literature. Many theorists have developed the ideas of national and cultural identity and diasporic experience. Stuart Hall and Edward Said are perhaps among the most distinguished ones, and their ideas offer tools also for my analysis. Hall for instance considers identity as a mixture of different fragments that spring from nationality, race, ethnicity, language, gender and social class, and he shares the idea of shifting, dislocated and fragmented cultural identities, which the often distinctly fragmented poems by Cruz can be seen to reflect already in their form.

The study will address questions of how the migrant experience and identity are portrayed in the poems: in what kind of situations, uses of language, tropes and metaphors these themes come forth. Cruz's identity is certainly shaped through the interaction of two distinct cultures and further enhanced with influences from other cultures around the world, as he has stated himself: "Culturally I am also a person of variety" (Cruz 1991, 9). Thus, I argue that this interaction is also present in his poetry. Secondly, I will examine how the migrant's experiences affect the concept of home and belonging. As Ashcroft et al. (2000, ix) note, transnational literatures widen postcolonial perspectives by discussing global phenomena that are not "directly emerging from colonial experience" but from the experiences of diasporic and migrant communities. Such transnational literatures discuss for instance the "mobility of individuals, the increased crossing of borders and the blurring of the concept of 'home'" (Ashcroft et al. 2000, ix). Therefore, many times, the migrant experiences a sense of rootlessness, or not belonging to any specific place, or even of belonging to several places at the same time.

This thesis will investigate several poems and essays by Cruz, selected from four of his collections *Snaps*, *By Lingual Wholes*, *Panoramas* and *Red Beans*, and additional writings from two of his larger collections: *Rhythm, Content & Flavor* and *Maraca: New and Selected Poems 1965-2000.* It is evident that Cruz's poetry is not only influenced by Puerto Rico and New York, but he also draws references from other Latin American countries, the Caribbean, and even North Africa and Muslim cultures, which further complicates the ideas of identity and migrant experience in his writing. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I will mainly concentrate on the idea of New York City contrasted to Puerto Rico. It should also be noted that the poems that are analyzed vary noticeably in their form: some are shorter free-versed poems, while others are distinctly more narrative, which represents yet another facet of Cruz's varied style. In many of the collections, the poems are accompanied by writings that should perhaps be characterized as essays. I will also analyze a few of these writings, since many of them address directly the migrant experience.

I will start by introducing the theoretical framework of my study and define the most important concepts that I will refer to in my analysis of Cruz's poems. Thereafter, in the third chapter, I discuss briefly the social and historical aspects related to Puerto Rico's colonial past and the Puerto Rican diaspora in New York City, and through definitions of different kinds of immigration I attempt to identify their status as migrants. I will also introduce the Nuyorican literary movement, paying special attention to its height in the 1960s and 70s, to understand the cultural framework for Cruz's works. I will end the chapter by briefly discussing Puerto Rico's current status and its complex relationship with the United States, for as Said (1993, 59) has stated, literary texts are many times affected by the historical, social and political environment of their time. It is important to understand these issues as a context for Cruz's works, for as he states in "Writing Migrations": "If we read and teach Latin American poetry, we should do it with a keen sense of history" (Cruz 1997, 122).

In the analysis, I will concentrate on three topics that clearly prevail in Cruz's writing, that is, place and landscape, language, and music. In the fourth chapter, the spatial issues associated with the

existing dichotomy between the island and the city and the ideas about borderlands or border existence will be discussed, for places and landscapes reoccur in Cruz's poetry as important poetic tropes. Such issues are also closely connected to the complexity in the representation of home and the sense of belonging. The fifth chapter will look at language and the bilingual facets of Cruz's linguistic expression, bearing in mind that language is often a pivotal constituent of an individual's identity. In fact, language is one of the most prominent ways Cruz illustrates the migrant experience and identity in his poetry. Lastly, the sixth chapter will deal with music and how it is used to rearticulate and reconstruct identity in Cruz's writing. Music is exceptionally important to Cruz's poetry, which is most often written in free verse. He not only mixes different genres of music in his poetic imagery, but also musicality is reflected in the poems' form in their rhythms and repetitions, which encourages the reader to read them aloud and even sometimes sing and dance to them, as demonstrated later in Chapter Six. Moreover, in many of his essays he acts as if he was educating the reader on the Nuyorican music tradition, and in vivid descriptions he attempts to recreate the lively music scene of the city.

2. Theoretical Framework: Defining Identity

In this chapter, I will introduce the theoretical framework of my study and define the most important concepts that I will refer to in my analysis of Cruz's poems. As already mentioned, I will base my analysis mainly on postcolonial theory, cultural studies and a variety of literary theory, for they provide a firm support for my reading of the poems.

As Hall (1997a, 2) maintains, *culture* is a complicated concept that has various definitions, some of which historically carry a certain prestige such as the term high culture that often refers to forms such as literature, art and philosophy. In this thesis, by *culture* I understand those forms often referred to as high culture as well as the more anthropologically defined ways of life of people, nations and societies without evaluating the importance of either one over the other, and I share the idea that cultures are socially constructed, thus, they affect the individual's or group's identity formation (Bertens 2014, 150-154). Moreover, as Hall (1997a, 2) writes, culture is "concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings", that is, when the participants of a culture understand and mediate meanings between them, and "interpret the world in roughly the same ways", they share a common culture. However, a shared culture naturally does not mean that there would not be differences in opinions and ideas mediated (Hall 1997a, 2-3). In any case, cultures serve to construct identities and they also maintain differences between groups, and through expressive means such as language these cultures express identification and belonging to certain national identities, or local communities (Hall 1997a, 3-5). In Cruz's writing, especially the language becomes a strong expression of belonging to a specific culture or tradition. Yet, it needs to be noted also that through globalization the more traditional and fixed ideas of, for instance, colonized cultures are becoming less significant, and the concept of culture is perceived more and more through different "'hybrid' formations" (Hall 2000, 225).

In this thesis, the term *imperialism* refers to the ideology of power and influence by one state over another, which is articulated through military and economic as well as symbolic power, and

colonialism, or the settling of people in a new area, is one form of maintaining imperialism (Boehmer 2005, 2; McLeod 2000, 7-8). What is noteworthy, according to McLeod (2000, 8), is that colonialism is not the only form of sustaining imperialism. This is apparent in today's world, when the age of colonialism is "virtually over", but imperialism continues to be practiced especially through the economy and by the United States, which Cruz also criticizes in his works. In turn, I will use the term *postcolonial* to refer to different processes, including for instance cultural, political or economic interaction, between the metropolis, or the imperial center, and the colonies after the initial encounter of the colonizer and the colonized (Bertens 2014, 173). In the context of literature, the writings of migrant communities from countries with colonial history are surely postcolonial (McLeod 2000, 33). Moreover, as Loomba (1998, xi) writes, postcolonial theory and literature attempt to "allow the voices of once colonized peoples and their descendants to be heard". Cruz's writing can be analyzed through this framework, since he as a Puerto Rican born author writing in New York City has certainly felt the pressure of the Anglo-American hegemony, and as part of the Nuyorican literary movement he is also eager to subvert the power of that hegemony. Moreover, as Boehmer (2005, 214-215) states, diasporic and migrant writers' position "is increasingly regarded as representative, if not iconic, of postcolonial writing in general". In addition, Puerto Rico can be considered a neo-colonial space as defined by Loomba (1998, 7), since although it possesses some form of autonomy, it still is economically, politically and culturally dependent on the United States. The question of Puerto Rico's status will be further analyzed in the succeeding chapter.

It is also useful to note the different connotations that the two terms *Hispanic* or *Latina/o* have, especially when it comes to identity, as indicated by for instance Remeseira (2010, 12), Morales (2002, 1-3) and Flores (2000, 147). For some people in the United States, Hispanic alludes to Spanish ancestry and it is reserved for the lighter skinned people, whereas Latina/o would naturally refer to Latin America rather than Spain or Europe specifically (Morales 2002, 1-3). According to Morales (2002, 2), in the U.S. the term Hispanic is often used by the assimilationists, whereas Latina/o is used

by for instance "intelligentsia, identity politicians, and young urbanites", and according to him the word Latina/o describes a "mixed-race people", or "a mixture of Spaniards, Africans, and indigenous people". However, Remeseira (2010, 12) also writes that in Spain and Latin America the terms "*Hispanic* and *Hispanic-American* have traditionally referred to the cultural heritage of all Spanish-language people", which makes it a broader term than the *Latina/o* that is generally used in the United States to refer to the English-speaking descendants of Latin American parents. Thus, the debate is complicated and choosing the right term is not straightforward. For the purposes of this thesis, the term *Latina/o* might be more useful, for it seems the more flexible and inclusive one of the two terms. Still, it should be noted that many of the so-called Latinos would rather first characterize themselves according to their heritage and national identity, for instance that they are firstly Puerto Ricans, secondly Latinos (Flores 2000, 7).

In the following subsections, I will outline the theories on cultural and national identity, and the discussion on diasporic experience as well as the terminology that relates to these areas of study. In section 2.1, I will discuss identity construction, how for instance the ideas about identity have changed from the stable subject to the modern view of fragmented identity. In section 2.2, I will move to what we understand by cultural and national identity and what they mean in the modern context, and section 2.3 will discuss diaspora and difference.

2.1 Identity Construction: From Stability to Fragmentation

One of the topics that has been of substantial interest among academics, and people in general, is an individual's identity. Thus, theories about identity construction have evolved tremendously during the past centuries, as indicated for instance by Cohen (2008). Interestingly, it seems also that identity becomes a topic whenever it is somehow questioned, threatened or confused, that is, when the identity is somehow marked with ambiguity. Cohen (2008, 421) illustrates aptly how ideas about identity have changed starting from a traditional view of identity as a "singular and stable" state that could

hardly be altered by the individual, to the present idea that people have various identities "constantly changing and being negotiated depending on the time and context of the situation". Thus, today we understand people having multiple identities simultaneously like mother/spouse/manager, and these identities are "socially constructed", that is, they vary between social environments, such as cultures.

Hall (1992, 275-276) elaborates further that the previous view of a fixed and stable identity, which formed the individual's inner core or self, came from the era of the Enlightenment, and the notion was later developed to a more interactional, sociological subject, who formed their identity and their inner self through the interplay of self and society. These views then changed in the modern era with the postmodern subject and its dislocated, time and place dependent and sometimes contradictory identities, which react to the constantly evolving societies (Hall 1992, 277). Cohen (2008, 421) also mentions Michael Foucault's idea that people, rather than "becoming", instead "transform" to the individuals they are, which implies that their identities will never be finished, but in constant flux. Such a concept is further developed by Hall (1992, 275), who sees that in the postmodern world, the subject could be seen to be "'post' any fixed or essentialist conception of identity". A migrant's life is often immersed in constant movement and change due to the dislocations of migration. Therefore, it is not surprising that also the identities that emerge from such a condition are fragmented and fluid.

According to Hall (1992, 274), the modern human subject with its fragmented or dislocated identity is seen to be the result of a great change, or "crisis of identity", which has affected modern societies since the late 20th century. The theorists who side with the notion of fragmenting identities[3] see the dislocations happening simultaneously in "the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, and nationality" and in the changing of personal identities, which ultimately results in the subject's "crisis of identity" (Hall 1992, 274-275). The fragmentation of identity coincides with

[3] For more thorough discussion on an individual's identity construction, see for instance Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay's work *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 1996

the fragmentation of migration in the post-industrialized period after the Second World War, when migration truly became "a global phenomenon and the line between sending and receiving economies is difficult to draw" (Toro-Morn and Alicea 2004, xvi).

In conclusion, modernity marked the emergence of the "isolated, exiled or estranged individual, framed against the background of the anonymous and impersonal crowd or metropolis" (Hall 1992, 285). Such description can be seen to fit well the Puerto Rican migrant's identity in a city like New York: the lonesome newcomer in the grand metropolis, who is alienated by the dominant society. As seen in the analysis, it is precisely such fragmented, and even hybrid, subjects that play the most important role in Cruz's writing.

2.2 Constructing Cultural and National Identity

Cultural identity then, according to Hall (1990, 223), can be defined at least in two ways. The first view sees cultural identities through a "shared culture" that provides the people "stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning" and emphasizes the "oneness" as an essence of any cultural identity that for instance the participants of a diaspora seek to discover (Hall 1990, 223). The second view sees cultural identity forming through the "points of difference" and emphasizes the transformative qualities of identities (Hall 1990, 225-226). That is, cultural identity "is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'": it "belongs to the future as much as to the past" and cannot be thought of as fixed and unchanging or as something that one can return to. Rather cultural identity is "always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth" (Hall 1990, 225-226). Hall (1990, 227-228) also mentions the Caribbean "'doubleness' of difference and similarity" that is present in the different countries: on the one hand, all the countries possess their different cultures and histories, but on the other, they all belong to the same "other" in the western perspective. It could be suggested that many participants of the Puerto Rican diaspora simultaneously tried to discover such a unity

through a shared culture, but were also aware of the power of difference as an identity-constructing force.

Cultural identities then, according to Hall (1992, 274), "arise from our 'belonging' to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national cultures". Hall (1992, 291) argues further that that the national cultures, or the cultures that we are born into, are "one of the principal sources of cultural identity", and therefore, if the individual lacks such a bond to a specific nation, there is often a danger of suffering a loss of one's identity. Belonging to a nation means that the people share a common "narrative of the nation", which is mediated through for instance national histories and literatures that sustain "a set of stories, images, landscapes, scenarios, historical events, national symbols and rituals" (Hall 1992, 293).

In Cruz's works, for instance, the reference to Puerto Rican traditions, folklore, landscapes and myths all support this view of a "narrative of the nation". Moreover, a *nation*, as defined by Ashcroft et al (2000, 134-140), is a socially constructed, homogenized idea of a set of common traits such as history, culture, territory, language and economy. According to McLeod (2000, 69) by performing and maintaining those common traditions, the nation gains a "sense of *continuity*" that "helps to concoct the unique sense of the *shared history* and *common origins* of its people". Said (2000, xxiv-xxv) writes that the strengthening and heightening of national identity is a direct result of imperialism since the 19th century and precisely in the problematic manner of superimposing one culture, race or society over another and establishing hierarchies between white and non-white peoples. As Ashcroft et al. (2000, 136) write, although the idea of a unified nation, and with it nationalism, continue to flourish in the 21st century, globalization and free market capitalism certainly undermine the importance of separate nations. Therefore, we might want to consider whether the importance of nations and national identities will change in the future. Maybe, as Ashcroft et al. (2000, 139) suggest, the turn towards an even more plural and multicultural idea of national identity will be gradually

accepted, or at least the territorially bounded notions of national identity will be less and less significant.

Often the idea of a national identity is to a degree imagined and even mythical and often "symbolically grounded on the idea of a *pure, original people or 'folk'*", thus, national cultures are often "tempted to turn the clock back, to retreat defensively to that 'lost time' when the nation was 'great', and to restore past identities" (Hall 1992, 295). Such ideas apply rather well to the Puerto Rican diaspora, or the Puerto Ricans that are displaced from their homelands, since away from home they tend to construct Puerto Rico as a mystical utopia that is symbolically restored for instance in many writings of the Nuyorican poets.

2.3 Diaspora and Difference

It should also be clarified, what is meant by *diaspora* in the context of this thesis. As Cohen (2001, ix) writes, diaspora has had multiple meanings throughout history: sometimes it has referred to traumatic banishment from one's homeland, while at other times it has been used by communities abroad who have formed a collective identity and have not suffered under colonialism. Nevertheless, as Cohen (2001, ix) states further, "all diasporic communities settled outside their natal (or imagined natal) territories, acknowledge that 'the old country' – a notion often buried deep in language, religion, custom or folklore – always has some claim on their loyalty and emotions". Sayyid (2000, 37-38) then suggests that at the core of a diaspora there lies three concepts, that is, "homeland, displacement and settlement". Such a migration then means a community of people leaving, or being displaced, from their homeland, sometimes against their will, and their settlement to another place, where they still foster the culture of their homeland and feel a great sense of community with their own people and "continue to narrate their identity in terms of that displacement" (Sayyid 2000, 38).

Therefore, the sense of displacement is one of the principal constituents of a migrant's identity, also acutely present in the writings of Cruz. Hall (1990, 235) defines diasporic experience not through

"essence or purity", but as identities that are "constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference", an identity that "lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*." According to Cohen (2001, xii), the Caribbean peoples are a good example of such hybridity, and Cohen sees these peoples forming a cultural diaspora "cemented as much by literature, political ideas, religious convictions, music and life-styles as by permanent migration".

Diasporas are also sometimes seen as "anti-nations" for unlike "the nation with its homogeneity and boundedness, diaspora suggests heterogeneity and porousness", and when a nation resembles home, diaspora denotes homelessness (Sayyid 2000, 41). However, as discussed a little later, many people of the Puerto Rican diaspora in the United States see themselves as belonging to the national discourse of Puerto Rico, which is perhaps one of the factors contributing to the uniqueness of the Puerto Rican diaspora. However, as Caragol-Barreto (2005, 8-9) writes, the island has maintained a clear "essentialist national discourse", which sets Puerto Rican culture "in binary opposition to American culture" and "defines Puerto Rican identity in relation to Spain". Therefore, the diaspora on the mainland has been seen by the islanders as "a danger to Puerto Rican national identity", for the diaspora is too proximate, physically and metaphorically, to North American culture (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 8-9). What is more, the "*generational differences*" in diasporic identity, as McLeod (2000, 207) states, are immensely important when thinking about the children of migrants who often live in diasporic communities and forge their identity in the crossfire of their present home country and the "'past migration history' of their parents or grandparents". Therefore, not all people who "live in a diaspora, or share an emotional connection to the 'old country'" have migrated themselves (McLeod 2000, 207).

Living in a diaspora always means confronting otherness. As Ashcroft et al. (2000, 9) argue, the construction of the subject is also always connected to its *alterity*, or its "others", which means that the subject mirrors itself through the others and their perceptions of the subject. Alterity is certainly a central theme in postcolonial criticism and migrant literature, and it is important also for

this thesis, for the Puerto Ricans in the United States certainly have lived as estranged others in the society, or as Cruz puts it in "Writing Migrations": "We are eternal aliens" (1997, 120). The dichotomy and balance between the Self and the Other can be seen to be a primary constituent of the subject's identity and part of every social structure, including the myth of nation, in our world. Moreover, to add to the complicatedness of difference, it is both positive and negative, it is ambivalent, in that alterity is at the same time necessary for producing meanings in our world, but simultaneously may inspire hostility towards the Other (Hall 1997c, 238).

Often "difference" is constructed according to skin color, when white is seen as the norm and "people of color" as the Other, who supposedly threaten the status quo of the white hegemony. Nonetheless, skin color is not the only trait according to which categorize people, for sexuality, gender and religion are also central factors here. Therefore, the Western hegemonic norm, or the invented fictive ideal that is persistent in the west, would be a white middle-class heterosexual male (Bertens 2014, 176-192). Thus, people deviating from this norm are othered by the dominating category according to how much different they are: for instance, how dark their skin is, and if they are heterosexual or not. Difference can also bare highly negative feelings, when things are seen as unfitting to certain cultural categories or binaries. One example, as Hall (1997c, 236) illustrates, is seeing the "mixed raced *mulattoes*" unable to fit neatly into the binary categories of black/white and they therefore fall into a "unstable, dangerous, hybrid zone of indeterminacy in-between". Sometimes these mixed raced people are therefore seen to "disturb cultural order", which mirrors the pointless strive for "pure" cultures (Hall 1997c, 236). One way to fight the racialized representation, as Hall (1997c, 272) remarks about the black binary, is to substitute the negative images with positive imagery, by "an acceptance – indeed, a celebration – of difference" (Hall 1997c, 272). Such substitutions do not automatically mean that the negative images will be displaced by the positive ones, for the "binaries remain in place", but nevertheless, it is worthwhile to try (Hall 1997c, 274). Cruz (1997, 15) truly embraces the idea of mixed heritage, as for instance in his essay "Home Is

Where the Music Is" he writes: "We are truly criollos and a visual festival… To us in Puerto Rico, it has come to mean the mixing of the cultural elements of the Indian, the Spanish, the African – a tripolarity that we recognize in music, dance, physical looks, and cuisine". Cruz's counter-hegemonic writing then challenges the persistent binaries dominant in the West.

As Hall (1992, 308) remarks, both the dominant ethnic groups and the minority groups may establish strong local identities to defend themselves if they feel threatened by the other. The participants of the Nuyorican movement can be seen to have formed such a local identity, where they for instance revived Puerto Rican cultural traditions but in the setting of the metropole in a very outspoken manner. Hall (1992, 308-309) also mentions new identities that are formed due to globalization, and an example of this is using the "'black' identity" as an umbrella term for many very different ethnicities that happen to be "non-white". Such a development can be seen also in the way Puerto Ricans were considered by the dominant culture, as seen for instance in Briggs (2003), since they were often compared with the African Americans to the point of being "'the same' (i.e. non-white, 'other')" (Hall 1992, 308). The Puerto Ricans in New York, however, intermingled eagerly with the African American community and as a result produced many novel and interesting art forms for instance in the realm of music, as discussed later in Chapter Six.

Moreover, as Hall (1992, 297) demonstrates, there is no such thing as a unified nation in terms of ethnicity, for instance, as all "*[m]odern nations are cultural hybrids*". As discussed, globalization has been an enormous factor in the changes and supposed fragmentation of national identities, and since international travel, global markets and the world-wide communications systems bring the people of different nationalities closely together regardless of their physical distance, their identities also find new forms, and simultaneously, local identities may intensify (Hall 1992, 299-303). Globalization can also be called "westernization", for the images and identities that circle most swiftly are the western ones, which drift to the confines of the "Other" (Hall 1992, 305). What is more, many migration processes can be perceived as results of globalization, when multiple people

are lured to the "west" by the promising prospects and higher "chances of survival", and the outcome is a "'pluralization' of national cultures and national identities" (Hall 1992, 306-307).

Thus, it seems that the importance of stable cultural or national identities are more and more contested in migrant communities, where the individual's identity is more likely to take a transnational or transcultural direction. *Transnational literatures* then are increasingly used to refer to literature written by migrants or nomads, who often write in a second language and about cross-cultural themes (Ashcroft et al. 2000, 214). As Ashcroft et al. (2000, 214) suggest, the term transnational writing might be in many cases a better term for such fluid writers, who "may feel 'at home' in several locations rather than 'exiled' from home and who spend time travelling, and even living in two or more locations". Although, the terms *diasporic literatures* and *postcolonial literatures* are likely to continue to be used in the same vain with *transnational literatures*, as Ashcroft et al (2000, 215) note, it might be useful to start to think of Cruz rather as a transnational writer. He, by definition, writes mostly in a second language, certainly thematizes cross-cultural ties, and sees himself as a nomad and his home to be mobile, in many locations at once: "As I have mentioned, I am a body of migration, an entity of constant change. From a tropical village to the biggest urban center known to man, from the East Coast to the West, from Spanish to English, from spirit to flesh" (Cruz 1991, 10).

Moreover, the Nuyorican identity is one form of a novel cultural identity that is very transnational in its nature: it borrows from the Puerto Rican culture but understands its location in the metropolis and constructs itself through the interaction of those two entities, and others as well. Cruz (1997, 22) also understands such a transnational position to be part of the Latino reality: "Being Latin American mestizo is a condition supplied by the crisscrossing of multinations. The cultures go one into another through the common root language, an extended nationalism that includes the entire hemisphere." The next chapter will provide a closer look into the uniqueness of Puerto Rican

migration to the United States in contrast to other newcomers to better understand the reasons behind the emergence of the diaspora's novel cultural identity.

3. Historical and Social Contexts of Puerto Rican Migration

In this chapter, the historical and social background of Puerto Ricans in New York City, the Nuyorican literary movement and Puerto Rico's status as an unincorporated territory of the United States will briefly be introduced, since I argue that such details are crucial in understanding the thematic echoes in the poems. In this chapter I will also present the different varieties of immigration relevant to the thesis. The history of Puerto Rican migration to New York City is analyzed in section 3.1. Section 3.2 will in turn highlight the most important thematic concerns of the Nuyorican literary movement, and finally in section 3.3, I will discuss Puerto Rico as a neocolonial space in order to understand the position of a Puerto Rican migrant in the imperial center.

3.1 Puerto Ricans in New York City: The Othered Citizens

According to Remeseira (2010, 1) New York City has been throughout its history a place of cross-cultural encounters: It is a prime example of a cultural salad bowl, where people with different ethnic backgrounds have met, come together and lived in interaction with each other for centuries. New York City can metaphorically be considered as the doorway to the American Dream, Ellis Island being the courtyard, since as Said (2000, xii) writes, the city was "the major American port of entry". Before the First World War the immigrants arriving to New York City were mostly from European countries like Ireland and Italy, however, after the Great War, a significant proportion of the immigrant population began to arrive from the Spanish speaking areas (Toro-Morn and Alicea 2004, xix). Therefore, as Haslip-Viera (2010, 33) suggests, there has been a recent increase in the interest of for instance policy makers, media and academics in the Latin community and their impact on various issues from housing to education in New York City.

The city had been a popular destination for Latin American people already before the 20th century. Remeseira (2010, 1) demonstrates how in the early 19th century New York became a place where many revolutionaries and politicos from South America came to search for allies and resources

to fight against Spanish rule in their home countries and after being freed of it, they came to form diplomatic relationships with the U.S. and their newly reformed republics. In a similar manner, many Puerto Rican nationalists spent time in New York City before the Spanish-American war in 1898, which ended the Spanish rule on the island and marked the beginning of the U.S. influence in Puerto Rico (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 93). Writings about New York City during that time consisted mainly of "diaries, correspondences and the often short-lived revolutionary newspapers", and in the early years of the 20th century the writings started to resemble immigrant literature, highly autobiographical in nature, yet written in Spanish rather than English (Flores 1993b, 144-146).

As Rubin and Melnich (2006, 93) note, especially at the time when Puerto Rico became a possession of the U.S., the relationship between the two countries could be characterized as one of colonizer and colonized. After the annexation, the United States, like any other colonizer, enforced U.S.-American customs and laws on the island, from public holidays to economic production. Such measures to transform and homogenize the local culture are immensely typical for Western colonizers, and such processes are primarily challenged by postcolonial criticism. Cruz frequently alludes to the colonial history of Puerto Rico in his works and is very critical of the former and latter colonizer alike. This is seen for instance in his essay "Some Thoughts as We Approach the 500th Anniversary of the Discovery of the Americas": "Ruled by Spain for 400 years, we became a possession of the United States as a result of the Spanish-American War. Goddamn Spaniards lost, tyrants that they were with our indigenous population" (Cruz 1991, 132). In the passage words like "tyrants" and "possession" aptly demonstrate the writer's inclination towards the issue. Nonetheless, after the annexation, as Hasplip-Viera (2010, 37) notes, Puerto Rico remained an unincorporated territory of the United States until 1952, when it received its commonwealth status. During the early decades of the 20th century, the United States transformed Puerto Rico's economy immensely, which was also the main reason for the massive emigration from the island during the early 20th century.

The twentieth century was according to Caragol-Barreto (2005, 8-9), a time of many distinct diasporic drifts resulting from for instance "national and international conflicts and post-colonial processes", and Puerto Ricans, approximately half a million of them, were one of those diasporic peoples, leaving their island in great numbers to chase the American Dream. Cruz (1997, 18) describes the inviting lure of the north in his essay "Home Is Where the Music Is" as follows: "Many families heard the call of the yonder, the whispers of the north. People in knots started to untangle and maneuver". The pull to the north seems mysterious and perhaps even suspect due to the idea of whispering, yet the moving towards the north untangles the knots caused by the economic distress. Moreover, in the essay "The Bolero of the Red Translation" it becomes evident that the intention was to create a better future for the next generation through migration:

> In migration populations relieve themselves of their own heaviness, the bottom takes flight in search of juices and waters, hoping for an eventuality of peace and tranquility. Sacrifices are made for others, go under now so that those in the future could rise to the oxygen.
>
> (Cruz 1991, 5)

As already mentioned, the main reason for the massive migration was the economic situation on the island. As Haslip Viera (2010, 38-39) demonstrates, the economic hardships in Puerto Rico resulted from the U.S. investments in the sugar industry after the annexation from Spain, which left the then prospering tobacco and coffee production deteriorating. The production changes meant "high structural and seasonal unemployment, low stagnant flexible wages, weak labor protection laws, a lack of a social safety net, and widespread poverty" for the people (Benson Arias 2007, 29). Thus, it was the U.S. efforts to turn an agricultural economy into an industrial one to meet the needs of the imperium that led to severe unemployment on the island and consequently to the mass migration to the mainland. The presence of agriculture is very prominent in Cruz's writings too, where he often seems to criticize the fast pace of life in the city in contrast to the more down-to-earth, concrete and naturalistic rural way of life. Often this criticism seems to be directed towards modernity and development, if they are used only as motors for capitalism and the growth of the U.S. economy.

On the other hand, it has been easier for the Puerto Ricans to leave for the U.S. than for many other Latin American peoples, since they were heavily influenced by the U.S. policies and even granted citizenship in 1917 to add manpower in the First World War: thus, they were in fact internal migrants (Remeseira 2012, 2). Moreover, more job opportunities were available for Puerto Ricans at that time, since European immigration had been curtailed after the war (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 93). However, since the First World War, Puerto Ricans have fought and had a disproportionate number of casualties in every war the U.S. has been part of (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 13). Even Cruz's father fought in the Second World War before the family migrated to the mainland (Hernández 1997, 67). The fact that the Puerto Ricans were granted citizenship only to recruit more people to fight in wars that the U.S. was associated with, reflects the ongoing exploitation that the people of the island were subject to. As the Nuyorican poet Miguel Algarín (1981, 89) puts it, the history of Puerto Rico is one of "greed and amorality", colored by various conflicts and exploitation, which has arguably shaped their relationship to their colonizer to this day.

As Haslip-Viera (2010, 36) suggests, the economic situation in Puerto Rico is directly seen in the growing numbers of migrants arriving in New York City since the 1930s, when they came to be the largest Hispanic group, perhaps surprisingly, since they were a relatively small people in contrast to other Latin American countries. The migrants were mostly working class, or poor, or as Cruz (1997, 19) puts it in "Home Is Where the Music Is": "It was not the upper classes that had to leave; the bourgeois never leave where they are milking". As remarked by Soto-Crespo (2009, xi) one third of the entire Puerto Rican population would migrate to the United States between the years 1940 and 1950, and in New York City the Puerto Rican population grew exceptionally rapidly. The migration was so intense that Cruz (1991, 92) even calls it "one of the great exoduses of recent times". According to Schneider (1999, 32), in 1930 around 45,000 Puerto Ricans inhabited the city and just twenty years later in 1950 the population had expanded to as many as 250,000 people. In 1960, the number of Puerto Ricans in the city had more than doubled in ten years and reached about 612,000

people. In 2000, the number of Puerto Rican residents in the New York City was still the largest in the mainland, as many as 789,172 people (Duany 2004, 180). On a national scale the largest waves of Puerto Rican emigration were in the 1950s and later in the 1980s, when both times almost half a million people migrated to mainland U.S., and today "nearly half of all persons of Puerto Rican origin live in the continental United States" (Duany 2004, 178).

Such immense processes of migration often make the traversing individuals experience certain negative feelings. According to Said (2000, 173), the modern age is strongly characterized by feelings of estrangement, alienation, anxiety and exile, yet, maybe it is precisely exiles, émigrés and refugees, who should be thanked for many important cultural achievements of the modern times. Although according to Said (2000, 181) "anyone prevented from returning home is an exile", he also differentiates between "exiles, refugees, expatriates, and émigrés" that characterize different forms of migration. Said (2000, 181) writes that the exile is an ancient term for those doomed to banishment and "miserable life" often characterized by solitude, whereas for instance a refugee is a term created in the modern times and often suggests "large herds of innocent and bewildered people requiring urgent international assistance". Expatriates then choose to live in another country, and "may share in the solitude and estrangement of exile, but they do not suffer under its rigid proscriptions" (Said 2000, 181). Émigrés for Said (2000, 181) "enjoy an ambiguous status", for it remains unclear whether they had a choice or not to emigrate to the new country.

In Said's terms then, the Puerto Ricans leaving the island in the 20th century were émigrés: they had a choice of leaving and were not directly forced to do so. However, as Caragol Barretto (2005, 10) confirms, the weak economic situation in the island left little choice for the people, many of whom decided to look for stronger livelihood in the United States, but ended up mostly in the poor neighborhoods of big cities like New York City, among others. It could be argued then that those people with almost no reason or opportunity to return to their homeland were at least in psychological terms exiles. Said (2000, 177) also states that when "nationalisms are about groups", then exile is "a

solitude experienced outside the group: the deprivations felt at not being with others in the communal habitation". Such was the situation for many Puerto Rican migrants, who according to Briggs (2003, 164) were not warmly welcomed by the New Yorkers, but rather greeted "with hostility". Moreover, in the early stages the newcomers were "conspicuously under- and unemployed, poorly fed, and often without sufficient warm clothing" (Briggs 2003, 164). In addition, the housing situation was poor and many migrants were forced to live in basements and even coal bins (Briggs 2003, 165). The hostility against the migrant is sometimes present in Cruz's (2001, 18) poetry too, for instance in the poem "Final poem", where after a description of street violence, a lady with "brown hands" falls on the ground. In the poem, the violence is made especially macabre, since it is directed towards an old woman.

According to Briggs (2003, 167), public opinion about Puerto Rican migrants since the year 1947 was largely shaped by newspaper articles written about the Puerto Rican "problem", their poverty and need for subsidies, which was greatly exaggerated, and there was no mention of the thriving cultural movements beginning in the newly formed Spanish neighborhoods, or *barrios*. The "problem" of Puerto Rican migration was also discussed in popular culture such as in the Broadway musical and later in the film *West Side Story* (1957), which supported the image of Puerto Rican migrants as youth delinquents (Rubin and Melnick 2006). Such rhetoric is much like that found today, when large-scale migrations are often described with words that have many negative connotations such as *flood*, *crisis* and *problem*.

Moreover, Latinos and African Americans, regularly linked together, were both thought to be on the "bottom rung of the social ladder" (Briggs 2003, 163). Puerto Ricans were also often racialized as "Negroes" in the 60s and the right-wing conservatives argued that there was something wrong with the families of the racialized minorities, that they raised their children wrong, which was supposedly the reason for their economic mishaps (Briggs 2003, 3-4). However, many Puerto Ricans can be seen to fall in the middle of the black/white binary: "Puerto Ricans were not obviously, consistently, or

conclusively understood to fit neatly into either category", as Rubin and Melnick (2006, 89) note. Yet, they were racialized and such racialized minorities were often seen as "not-very-successful immigrants" (Briggs 2003, 3).

However, as already mentioned, Puerto Ricans were not immigrants, if being exact, but rather internal migrants "moving from one American island to another" (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 92). But the way they were marginalized in the media, and in the public in general, would suggest otherwise: they were consistently othered by the mainland people and thus had a similar experience as many other unwanted immigrants. As Briggs (2003, 14) explains, the U.S. political discourse about Puerto Rico has revolved around two main themes: the conservative view of the "horrifying" difference and alienism of Puerto Ricans and the liberal view of the people as "assimilable but in need of 'our' help". Thus, the Puerto Ricans stand in contrast to the United States in a difficult location: they are seen as "(inferior) Americans", but their supposed "difference" excludes them from being full Americans (Briggs 2003, 14). This "double bind" reflects, according to Briggs (2003, 14), Homi Bhabha's idea of mimicry. Bhabha (1997, 158) describes the colonial authority as repeatedly turning "from *mimicry* – a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to *menace* – a difference that is almost total but not quite" and in that "the twin figures of narcissism and paranoia" can be detected, the same ones that are present in the U.S. colonial discourse on Puerto Ricans. Furthermore, the "poverty" for which the Puerto Ricans need help is allegedly not the result of colonialism or U.S. involvement, but rather the reasons were the Puerto Ricans and their "bad" way of living.

The social scientists of the time wrote often about the "culture of poverty" in connection with African Americans and other minorities, which was according to them a direct result of the family structure: bad mothers doomed their children to poverty, which is claimed for instance in the Moynihan Report or *The Negro Family: The Case For National Action* in the year 1965 (Briggs 2003, 163-164). Such reasoning obscured the more likely reasons behind poverty like unemployment and difficulties in the housing market (Briggs 2003, 165). Moreover, many employers in the 60s started

to use those assumed cultural traits as reasons why not to employ Puerto Ricans or African Americans, who were similarly thought to have ill, disorganized familial structures, that is, the families were run by bad mothers (Briggs 2003, 165). According to Briggs (2003, 9), the Puerto Rican women and especially their sexuality were used to define the Puerto Rican "difference" in popular culture. The women were often seen as promiscuous and the reason for the overpopulation and consequently, the poverty of the island.

What is more, among the different Latino communities, the Puerto Ricans were paradoxically seen to have more power in the city as the first substantial migrant group, yet at the same time they were "accomplishing less than other Latinos" (Flores 2000, 157). As Acosta-Belén (1992, 981) confirms, for many scholars of the time the Puerto Ricans lived in "a cultural desert sharing as much the culture of poverty as a poverty of culture". They were not well assimilated into the U.S. culture, which was seen as the reason for their lack of socioeconomic success (Acosta-Belén 1992, 981). Thus, the idea of the Puerto Rican "difference" earlier thought of as a question of "race" was gradually replaced by a thought of "culture" that was different (Briggs 2003, 165). The above-mentioned processes of racialization and creation of binary oppositions like rational or irrational, savage or civilized, and white or non-white are very often challenged in postcolonial literary criticism, and the Nuyorican Poets, among other activist groups on the mainland, started also to react to such representations of their community's culture: they were victims of colonialism, thus their "poverty" was not a direct result of their culture (Briggs 2003, 166).

According to Remeseira (2010, 2), New York City represents the demographic development of the entire country quite well, reconstructing the city into a "microcosm of the Americas" or a "cultural hemispheric crossroads". Although the idea of a shared Latino identity might sometimes be too general, for it does not account for the different histories and cultures of the different Latino groupings, nevertheless, many Latino communities in the city have shared a common cause for instance dealing with unemployment. Therefore, they could be seen to have at least some form of

unity. Remeseira (2010, 5) argues for instance that the alliance between Puerto Ricans and Cubans fighting for independence in the late 19th century marked a change in the previously divided endeavors of different Latino groups, and the idea of a shared Latino identity continued to blossom in the 20th century New York City, where lively social gatherings among Spanish-speaking people celebrating their various heritages became a norm. As Said (2000, xii) confirms, the city has over time evolved into a public stage for the various artists and innovators with their "urban expatriate narratives", and this innovativeness and artistry has become part of the city's identity. Since the 1950s, the Puerto Ricans have been considered, according to Flores (2000, 141), "the prototype (or archetype, but certainly the stereotype) of Latino/Hispanic/"'Spanish' New York". As Remeseira (2010, 2-3) remarks, while Puerto Ricans are the largest Hispanic group in New York City, still they account for less than 35 percent of the entire Hispanic population, which mirrors well the multitude of different ethnic groups, including for instance Dominicans, Mexicans, Ecuadorans and Cubans among others, living in the city. Remeseira (2010, 2-3) notes that such demographic development is also different from other big cities like Los Angeles and Miami, where the Hispanic communities are less heterogeneous, pointing to a more "pan-Latino direction." Therefore, as Flores (2000, 142) notes, due to the recent demographics "'Latinos in New York' no longer rhymes with Puerto Rican". Then, as Flores (2000, 142) suggests, the pan-Latinization of the city during the recent decades also challenges the traditional ideas of Puerto Rican or Nuyorican identity and require a wider view over the issue.

3.2 The Nuyorican Literary Movement

As already stated, the Nuyorican literary movement is part of a larger cultural movement involving various artists of Puerto Rican heritage either born or raised in the United States and living in and around New York City, ranging from writers to painters and musicians, among others (Carragol-Barreto 2005, 8). The Nuyorican poets followed in the footsteps of the Beat Generation, or writers

such as Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac, who "drew on their experiences of bohemian city life" discussing themes that "had until then been alien to American literature" (Hernández 1997, 6). However, the Puerto Ricans were the ones quite literarily "beat up" as the marginalized people on the "lowest socioeconomic rungs" (Hernández 1997, 6). The Nuyorican movement, sprung from neighborhoods such as East Harlem and the South Bronx, enjoyed its height during the sixties and seventies. Since then, as Acosta-Belén (1992, 980) indicates, the Puerto Rican writers have since then fought against the marginalization that they have faced in the city by forming a collective identity, the *Nuyoricanness* "stemming from the migrant experience", which they have articulated through shared literary conventions, techniques and themes in their works. Such conventions and common features, especially during the sixties and seventies, include for instance "the use of Taíno and African imagery, the critique of the Spanish colonization in Puerto Rico, the reference to social displacement, and the subversion of artistic conventions such as traditional artistic genres and media" (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 7). These features then have created a shared aesthetics, or as Carregol-Barreto (2005, 7) names it, the "aesthetics of the Puerto Rican exile".

The Nuyorican movement has sought to bring its artists to the foreground, for they have been "under-represented or unrepresented in mainstream museums" (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 8). For the visual artists, the most important institutions that were founded to house exhibitions and workshops are for instance El Museo del Barrio, El Taller Boricua, and En Foco (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 8). Meanwhile, the poets have gathered in the Nuyorican Poet's Café to share thoughts and ideas and even to perform, often in their creative way using Spanglish as their language of expression (Bazán-Figueras and Figueras 2014, 263). The Café attracted not only the Nuyoricans and Latinos but also various people of different ethnicities and backgrounds (Hernández 1997, 7). The following passage from a poem called "today is a day of great joy" from Cruz's first collection *Snaps* illustrates how poems are used as a force of resistance and change:

> when poems start to
> knock down walls to

choke politicians
when poems scream &
begin to break the air

that is the time of
true poets that is
the time of greatness
(Cruz 1968, 29)

The poem presents a strong, idolized poet that can have the power to make social change. In fact, the height of the movement coincided with other endeavors of ethnoracial minorities to voice out their frustration against social and political realities: the activism of the civil rights movement and protests against Vietnam War, among others (Acosta-Belén 1992, 980).

As Caragol-Barreto (2005, 7) writes, among the Nuyoricans' common conventions have been for instance the "use of Taíno and African imagery". The native population of Puerto Rico, the Taínos, are characterized as a "kind, noble, and docile population" and often referred to in the visual arts of the Puerto Rican Diaspora, for they symbolically serve as the primary markers of Puerto Rican identity and as "the most legitimate link of Puerto Ricans to their land" (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 11-12). Caragol-Barreto (2005, 12) also suggests that the artists of the Puerto Rican diaspora sympathize with the oppressed Taínos, for like the native population suffered under the colonial rule of Spain, the Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. have been marginalized and oppressed. However, Caragol-Barreto (2005, 14) notes further that in many Nuyorican poems, the Taínos are often criticized for their tame nature, and the poets do not idolize them as much as the visual artists, and they have focused more on the present "daily experience of cultural negotiation of Puerto Ricans from the Diaspora".

The importance of the African imagery for the Nuyorican artists could be explained by the long history of marginalization that people of African descent experienced in Puerto Rico and in the U.S. As Caragol-Barreto (2005, 16) states, as well as with other Latino groups, the Puerto Ricans have had close ties also with the African American communities in New York, for they have shared common experiences of social displacement. Many Nuyorican writers, Victor Hernández Cruz among them,

sympathized with the ideas of the Black Arts movement and their thoughts on "nationalism, language, and music" and they would "consistently and powerfully insist that their identities were intricately tied up with vanguard African Americans" (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 121). Moreover, the artists are aware of the "underestimated contribution of African culture to Puerto Rican national identity" and have desired to question the often "Hispanofilic foundations" of the ideas on identity prevalent on the island, or the over-emphasis of "racial and cultural traits derived from the Spanish" (Caragol-Barreto 2005, 16). In Cruz's writing the Afro-Caribbean influences are highly visible ranging across, for instance, godly figures, foods, rituals, myths and other traditions, as well as customs of music and dance that are analyzed in the sixth chapter.

As previously mentioned, the Nuyoricans were detested by the cold New Yorkers; however, they were also despised by those who stayed in Puerto Rico (Briggs 2003, 166). Although the immensity of the migration from the mid-century onwards sparked the use of immigrant themes also in Puerto Rican national literature, still the literary works of Nuyorican authors were constantly disregarded by island critics and writers. Especially literature written mainly in English was seen as "a mere extension of American literature", and often precisely the choice of language evoked the debate on who could call themselves Puerto Rican (Acosta-Belén 1992, 980-981). Moreover, the literature of the sixties and seventies was many times seen as an example of the "nuyorican identity crisis", as if the Nuyoricans' questioning of identity had no connection to similar issues about culture and colonial past on the island (Acosta-Belén 1992, 981). Thus, the islanders were unable to see the Nuyorican production as an extension of the Puerto Rican national culture, or as alternative forms of that culture illuminating the migrant experience. This is one of the reasons why the Nuyoricans have felt so unattached of both the mainland and the island, and instead have been lodged in between those two entities, as a "nation that is afloat" (Sandoval Sánchez 1997, 197). Such feeling of in-betweenness and border-identity will be further analyzed especially in the fourth chapter.

Thus, Caragol-Barreto (2005, 10) describes the complications of identity for the Puerto Rican émigrés as a broken identity and a certain state of in-between, where they are dominated by two different realities: their past in the island and their present in the U.S., to neither of which they completely belong. Moreover, Miguel Algarín (1981, 90) describes the Nuyorican poet's break from tradition as a process, where they need to shape their poetry by looking at the present rather than spending too much time in the historical past:

> We do not so much look to the historical development of Puerto Rican literature as much as we just lay down the poem on the page. Our usage and our new content is going to struggle with the forms and the old meanings, but that is again nothing new, and we will continue to fight that struggle.

This clash between two spatial and temporal realities has been according to Esterrich (1998, 43) also a source of instability in the Nuyorican poets' writing as "one of their literary concerns, trying either to carve out a space for their writing or to create a new space." Said (2000, 181) also writes that "[m]uch of the exile's life is taken up with compensating for disorienting loss by creating a new world to rule". Literature and poems could be seen as such a creative process of forging new worlds, and to create that new space the writers often experiment with language.

For Cruz (1991, 7), poetry and identity clearly overlap: "Poetics is the art of stopping the world, asking it the basic question: Where are you coming from?" The writing of the Nuyorican poets could perhaps then be what Hall (1990, 224) calls "*production* of identity", that is, by writing and "*re-telling*" the past they meanwhile produce their identity. According to Caragol-Barreto (2005, 10), the Nuyoricans have questioned the colonial history of the island and their marginalization on the mainland, but they have reconstructed their identity through the "collective myths, memories and icons" that remind them of the Puerto Rican national identity. Nevertheless, Flores (1992, 194) warns against an essentialist view of identity. According to him, the Puerto Rican identity and national culture are defined by the various physical, mental, social and cultural contacts and connections to the "Other(s)" that surround the island. It could be argued, as Hall (1990, 224-225) illustrates with the Caribbean diaspora, that the Nuyoricans too have strived to heal their "loss of identity", which

has resulted from their displacement from the island, by reliving their past, or returning to the island in their poems. However, they have not rediscovered Puerto Rican cultural identity as such, but rather discovered a new hybrid kind of identity, mixing their past with the present and Puerto Rico with New York City. It could be argued that they have made that uneasy state of in-betweenness their strength and source of creativity.

The Nuyorican reality is, then, according to Acosta-Belén (1992, 993-994), "expressed through dichotomized interpretations". That is, their identity is fragmented by "the two cultural and linguistic contexts": the two geographical realities of their "mythical roots" in Puerto Rico and the "'mean streets' of New York City", the "social and cultural differences" between the island and the city, and the conflict between a "materialistic society and the spiritual values attributed to the oppressed class". But the Nuyorican poets also tropicalize New York in their works and recreate "Puerto Rico in the enclaves of El Barrio (Spanish Harlem), Loisada (New York's Lower East Side), Los sures (Williamsburg, Brooklyn) or the Bronx" (Acosta-Belén 1992, 994). According to Algarín (1981, 90-91), the Nuyorican poets are then free from restrictions to write about their real conditions as they were. He describes the poetry as starting from "Point Zero", or with a clean slate: "When you have nothing and can expect nothing, anything you do is something". Algarín (1981, 90-91) sees the Nuyorican poet as free of regular standards, which leaves space for experimentation for instance with the language. It should be noted also that unlike the previous generation of writers, the Nuyorican writers in the 1980s and 1990s presented far grimmer outlooks on the Puerto Rican social presence in the city and also the island. The "idyllic homeland and cultural womb for most of the earlier Nuyorican writers", did not bear such a great significance in the writing of the younger generation (Flores 2000, 186). In addition, during the earlier decades, women writers were almost absent from the movement with their "doubly invisible" position in the society. However, today the number of women writers has steadily increased (Hernández 1997, 10). Nonetheless, Cruz's poetry represents in most parts the earlier Nuyorican aesthetic fascinated by the tropical past. Cruz is also according to

Hernández (1997, 63), the only well-known poet of the Nuyorican movement who moved back to the island.

In conclusion, the Nuyorican poets challenge the stereotypical and often narrow descriptions of Puerto Ricans in journalistic and academic discourse and in the popular culture with romanticized productions about the Puerto Rican migration such as the *West Side Story*, and they plead for a more varied view of their rich culture (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 96). The poets have addressed issues such as social displacement and marginalization, but they also write about their individual experience and personal conflicts in settling into the metropolis, or the colonial center. It should be noted, however, that by the 1990s the position of U.S. Puerto Rican literature had significantly improved, as Aparicio (2003, 152-153) writes, and many of the previously understudied authors have finally been inserted into the U.S. literary canon. What is more, many island writers have been also included into the U.S. Puerto Rican canon, and even texts written in English are accepted and published in and from the island, which is another indication of the transnational nature of the writing and the increasing diversity of the "circuits of migration of people, texts, and readers" (Aparicio 2003, 153-154).

3.3 Puerto Rico's Colonial Dilemma

The relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States has been conflicted since the annexation of the island from Spain. During the Cold War, the Third World was used by the colonizers to demonstrate the development of democracy and economic success, which would be claimed as the result of U.S. open-handedness and assistance, and Puerto Rico became the main object on display (Briggs 2003, 2). These "good sides" to colonialism were according to Briggs (2003, 1-19) for instance "changes in family forms, women's rights, and science and medicine" in Puerto Rico. However, such procedures were often justified in the U.S. colonial rhetoric as answers to the problem of overpopulation, which was named as the reason for the colonized countries' poverty.

Negrón-Muntaner (2007, 7) calls it an "unexpected irony" that the standard of living improved in Puerto Rico only because of the United States' imperialistic endeavor to rule the global markets. Especially during the industrialization program or "Operation Bootstrap" from the late 40s to the 70s, labor protection and social safety improved in the island (Benson Arias 2007, 29). Thus, as Grosfoguel (2003, 2) terms it, Puerto Rico became a "modern colony" in that it has "access to metropolitan citizenship and welfare transfers", so that the country stands in a better position in contrast to the other Caribbean countries. However, simultaneously it is deeply inserted into the capitalistic global market, which brings according to Benson Arias (2007, 30) benefits and stability, but at the cost of, for instance, environmental problems and labor exploitation, although not the most severe kind. One clear example of Cruz's (2001, 11) critique on U.S. colonialism and imperialism is the poem "The Land", where the pristine nature of Puerto Rico is corrupted by U.S. consumerism, mass culture and debris:

> Our blue sea
> now filled with cheap scum-bags
> made in the USA
> the continuous forests
> now interrupted by Coca-Cola signs
> …
> the pueblo of my mother
> of pretty music
> now sold in stocks
> the yankee hand
> touching my land
> the touch of hate
> the touch of death

It is evident that the speaker of the poem poses "Us", the Puerto Ricans, against "Them", the Yankees, who are obviously intruding the land with their hateful and deadly touch. The scum-bags filling the sea is an inventive double-sided metaphor, which could denote trash that consumerist societies produce in mass as well as the loathsome Yankees swimming in the sea and occupying it with their vessels or commercial cruise ships. Mainstream culture and capitalism is represented in the poem by one of the most famous corporations in the world, Coca-Cola, and the idea of the very personal

midnight songs, the "pretty music" now being sold "in stocks". The poem is very clear in its stance: nothing in the island stays untouched when the U.S.-Americans arrive; their corrupting ways are a threat to the culture and community of the island.

According to Briggs (2003, 11), some Americans in the mainland are in fact puzzled over the reluctance of many Puerto Ricans to be free of the colonial status and attain independence. As Negrón-Muntaner (2007, 1) briefly recounts, since 1952 Puerto Rico has been organized under the status of *Estado Libre Asociado* (ELA), or commonwealth, which means that although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and can be drafted to the military, they cannot help to elect the president or even have a vote in the Congress. There are, according to Grosfoguel (2003, 43-44) both people who support and oppose the present political status of the island; however, there are hardly any people who opt for independence, as seen in four different referendums organized since 1993. As explained by Briggs (2003, 12), the Puerto Rican economy is connected to the U.S. economy to such a degree that it could be called a "regional economy of the United States". This could be seen as one of the main reasons why so many Puerto Ricans would rather stay under the U.S. influence than struggle to free the country of its imperialist superior. Moreover, there are so many special agreements between the two countries that the Puerto Ricans benefit in many ways from their subordinate role (Briggs 2003, 12).

Following the 1993 referendum, there have been three more attempts to finally solve the "500-year-old colonial dilemma" of the island, as the pro-statehood Governor Ricardo Rosselló calls it (Wyss 2017). The most recent referendum of June 2017 brought a surprising outcome: as many as 97% voted for statehood, rather than free association/independence or commonwealth. However, the voting activity was exceptionally low–only 23% voted–as most people were simply boycotting the referendum (Robles 2017). Presently, Puerto Rico is struggling with an enormous $74 billion debt and many people are once again fleeing to the mainland to evade the massive cuts that will take place in the public sector (Robles 2017). In fact, there are about four million Puerto Ricans living in the

United States, which is more than on the island (Negrón-Muntaner 2007, 8). Although many Puerto Ricans think that statehood would resolve the current economic distress, still many are worried that if Puerto Rico becomes the 51st state of the U.S. it will lose its sense of national culture, identity and language in the process (Robles 2017). Moreover, the boycotters were especially unsettled by the name of the referendum: "Plebiscite for the Immediate Decolonization of Puerto Rico", in which the "decolonization" would suggest that Puerto Rico still is a colony. Many Puerto Ricans refuse to think so, and if the people had voted for keeping the present status, they would have voted for keeping Puerto Rico a colony (Robles 2017). However, as Robles (2017) suggests, it is unlikely that the U.S. Congress will accept Puerto Rico's plea to become a state in the near future, since it would have "the highest unemployment rate and poverty in the nation". Also, if Puerto Rico became a state, there would be the problem of incorporating the culture of Afro-Caribbean Latinos into a country where defenders of Anglo-American dominance have been growing more vocal and hostile towards other cultures, as for instance the 'English Only' movement indicates, as discussed for instance in Betti (2011, 36-37). Therefore, the uncertain status of the country is yet likely to remain unresolved.

Thus, as Duany (2007, 51) suggests, Puerto Rico could be called a "postcolonial colony": its people have "a strong sense of national identity but little desire for nation-state", and their present and future seem to be tightly bound with the United States. Moreover, Puerto Rico is a "nation on the move", characterized by the ever flowing current of migrants arriving there and leaving again, both original islanders and their children and people from other, mainly Caribbean, countries. The migrating in and out of the island and the crossing of "significant geographic, cultural, and linguistic borders between the island and the mainland" make Puerto Rico a "test case of transnationalism", which could be characterized as a "maintenance of social, economic, and political ties across national borders" (Duany 2007, 51). Therefore, there is a need for a new definition of national identity, which avoids any essentialist characterization and calls for a broader transnational view, as already

discussed. It could also be suggested that the ambiguity of Puerto Rico's status reflects the in-between, sometimes even undecided, identity of the people of the Puerto Rican diaspora.

Moreover, Duany (2007, 53) sees the Puerto Rican diaspora in the mainland as belonging to the Puerto Rican nation, since the cultural, economic and political transmission and movement of people back and forth is so frequent. However, Puerto Ricans, as Duany (2007, 55) writes, both in the mainland and on the island avoid a traditional view of a nation with fixed "shared territory, language, economy, citizenship, or sovereignty"; instead their identities are in flux, and hybrid in nature. It also needs to be noted that the Puerto Rican diaspora is unique in the sense that a significant number of migrants have returned to the island and perhaps even left again (Duany 2007, 54-56). The metaphor that is often used to describe the intensity of the back-and-forth movement of Puerto Ricans is a "revolving-door" (Duany 2007, 55). However, Frances Aparicio (2003, 154) also asks whether Cruz still can be seen a diasporic U.S. Puerto Rican author after his return migration to Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico. But although Cruz does not live in the U.S. anymore, he writes mostly in English, and his identity is shaped through the experiences of his childhood and early adulthood in New York City and California, which would support the positioning of his work as part of the U.S. Puerto Rican literary landscape.

Nevertheless, although Puerto Ricans are citizens of the United States, they still see moving to the mainland as a great cultural dislocation and may portray their new home as immensely foreign to them (Duany 2007, 56). Cruz (1991, 6) describes his own dislocation in his essay "The Bolero of the Red Translation" as so drastic a change that he felt like he had stepped into a time machine: "we did not so much arrive to a new land as manage to shoot like in a time machine to the next age over. BANG." However, returning to the island also has its own troubles. The returnees, like Cruz, are sometimes disdained by the islanders and seen as less Puerto Rican if, for instance, they mainly speak English, and in Puerto Rico, the term Nuyorican, which is used for returnees from all over the U.S., more often has had negative connotations than positive ones (Duany 2004, 188; Duany 2007, 54).

The negative stereotypes about the Nuyoricans and their Americanization extend from their "way of speaking, dressing, walking" to their supposed more "pushy, aggressive, and disrespectful" behavior, whereas the Nuyoricans find themselves more "cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and independent than the islanders" (Duany 2004, 188). The friction between the two groups according to Duany (2004, 188) "frequently resembles the tense relations between different and opposed ethnic groups".

Ironically, the immigrants in Puerto Rico face very similar discrimination as the Puerto Ricans in the United States. Cuban immigrants for instance are portrayed as "foreign to the national imaginary of Puerto Ricans" and their influence in the culture and politics of Puerto Rico is not generally valued (Duany 2004, 188-189). Meanwhile, Dominican immigrants, especially the undocumented ones, are many times faced with outright hostile attitudes and "anti-Dominican prejudice", for they often "represent a disadvantaged minority in legal, racial, economic, and gender terms" (Duany 2004, 189). As Duany (2004, 189) writes, the Dominicans are often erroneously blamed for unemployment and crime, and stereotyped as "dumb, ignorant, dirty, disorderly, and violent", which very much resembles the idea of a foreign "Other", such as the Puerto Ricans, in the U.S.

What is then noteworthy, according to Duany (2007, 57-58), is that although the Puerto Ricans lack sovereignty, they consider themselves before anything as Puerto Ricans, belonging to a Puerto Rican nation, and they foster their own nationalistic culture with its varied emblems, and yet still most people do not hope for independence. The migrants, on the other hand, who are in many cases bilingual, usually form their own type of nationalism, which often defines a nation in a broader, transnational and bicultural sense (Duany 2007, 61). As Toro-Morn and Alicea (2004, xxii) state, in general the "Latin American migratory experience can also be characterized by the transnational ties that immigrants maintain across borders between their home and host communities". These ideas of crossing borders and maintaining ties to one's home and recreating a new home in the new country, or perhaps the experiences of psychological homelessness and not-belonging, will be discussed in the

next chapter that analyses places, landscapes and travelling, as well as borderlands and -areas, which often represent the migrant's experience of in-betweenness.

4. Place and Landscape

This chapter will discuss the interesting dichotomies that form between the migrant's original home country and the new home in the metropolis. Depictions of landscapes are vital to Cruz's poetry and he habitually juxtaposes the island of Puerto Rico with the city of New York, which often results in a match between tropical rurality and cold urbanity. Cruz (1887, 21) himself recognizes this quality of his works, as seen in for instance in his essay "Home Is Where the Music Is": "The encounter between rural and urban landscape, a debate released through migration, a discussion of spatial tempos, city versus tropical, these are steeped in my consciousness and echo through my poetic creations". In addition, in this chapter I will further develop the idea of borders and borderlands that describe the migrant's experience of crossing and crisscrossing actual and imagined borders. Therefore, metaphors about travelling also become essential for the migrant writer. The previously mentioned factors will all be dealt with in section 4.1. How is it then possible to achieve a sense of belonging and homeliness amidst a migratory process that is epitomized by constant movement? I will end this chapter by discussing different configurations of home and belonging in Cruz's writing in section 4.2.

4.1 Borders in the Air

As Tuan (2003, 3) states, "Space and place are basic components of the lived world", which means that the human experience is constantly preoccupied by these concepts, and that we ascribe much personal value to space and place. Although there are qualities to space and place that are globally similar, it is often culture that in many ways affects the way people "attach meaning to and organize space and place" (Tuan 2003, 5). Moreover, generally space is thought of as "more abstract than 'place'", that is, "space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value" (Tuan 2003, 6). Therefore, place often embodies "security and stability" and a "pause in movement", whereas space is often configured in terms of "openness, freedom, and threat", which also "allows

movement" (Tuan 2003, 6). In these terms, I discuss in this section contrasting ideas of place in the same U.S.-American space that emerge from Cruz's poetry. That is, how, for instance, the rural Puerto Rican place competes with the urban metropolis of New York. What is more, according to Tuan (2003, 118), the concept of time is intimately connected with the ideas of space and place, which is also highly visible in Cruz's poetry.

For Cruz and other Nuyorican poets space, place, distance and geography have served as powerful metaphors and poetic tropes, which is understandable considering their position as a diasporic people commuting between different localities. In fact, López (2005, 205) states that "Nuyorican poetry is obsessed with space", and he claims that the poetry does not merely have a setting, but the places and spaces are the reason for the emergence of the poetry. López (2005, 205) goes further arguing that spaces in Nuyorican poetry are in fact "a layered conversation on national identity". As McLeod (2000, 72-73) suggests, in "nationalist representations" the idea of belonging or rootlessness are many times connected to the very concept of land: one might belong to a land or the land might belong to someone. Moreover, as already mentioned, Hall (1992, 293) sees the members of a nation as participating in a common "narrative of the nation", which supports for instance national landscapes that are reminisced over and romanticized. In Cruz's poetry, the tropical island with its lush landscapes, flora and fauna is contrasted with the concrete jungle of urban New York, as for instance in his poem "Los New Yorks": "I present you the tall skyscrapers / As merely huge palm trees with lights" (Cruz 2001, 51). However, the native land of Puerto Rico is also often idealised in many ways to make it seem as a perfect paradise full of community and tradition in contrast to a greyer, busier, capitalistic big city with its lonesome dwellers.

For Hall (1990, 234), the Caribbean is a place of displacement and migration starting with the "original pre-Columbian inhabitants, the Arawaks, Caribs and Amerindians, permanently displaced from their homelands and decimated; of other peoples displaced in different ways from Africa, Asia and Europe; the displacements of slavery, colonization and conquest." Due to these displacements

and migrations, the modern Caribbean subject has then been described as a "modern or postmodern New World nomad, continually moving between centre and periphery" (Hall 1990, 234). Cruz (1991, 5) sees the migrants as nomads to a point that the act of traveling, here in "The Bolero of the Red Translation" represented by luggage, becomes part of who they are and metaphorically, parts of their bodies: "Suitcases looked like parts of bodies, like extensions of arms and hands". In fact, moving by walking and cycling in the city, different means of transportation like the New York City subway, trains and airplanes, and other tropes related to travelling are very typical for Cruz's poems that describe migration and they come to epitomize the migrant's constant preoccupation with movement.

For instance, in one of the poetic essays in *Red Beans*, "Old San Juan", the entire island of Puerto Rico is imagined to be in motion, embarked from its location like a vessel navigating the seas: "It was only the wave that was created by the splash of the island going onto its belly, to make the first country that became a floating mass, that became mobile, that took off from its position on the globe" (Cruz 1991, 125). Metaphorically, the island's movement comes to mean migration:

> There are many who still do not believe that we are gone, that unless we anchor onto something we will eternally be leaving one place for the other. When you say you're over here you are gonna be over there. Migration is the steady song of being, idea and song looking for food in the wilderness of space.
>
> (Cruz 1991, 128)

The idea that emerges from the text is the lack of rootedness that the constant migration causes: one is not anchored to any place and is simultaneously, constantly, here and there. The entire island is moving and it does not have a clear aim where to go, as if it was contemplating whether to float towards the South or the North. It could be suggested that Cruz is discussing the colonial dilemma in "Old San Juan", where floating towards the South would perhaps denote independence, if South represented the independent Latin American countries, whereas moving towards the North, or the United States, would promote statehood. This interpretation is supported by the introduction of a character, a café owner Checo, who is one of the few people given a voice in the text and he talks about politics:

> He used to say Either we become a state or we become independent, this Commonwealth lingo makes no sense, hanging like this. It's a nowhere kind of stance, it's not a stance at all, you just stand there while designs are being made around your head.
> (Cruz 1991, 128)

Such a "nowhere kind of stance" not only describes the Commonwealth status but also reflects the social reality of the U.S. Puerto Ricans, their lasting position between here and there, and the constant involvement and attachment of the island to their lives. As Flores (2000, 11) puts it,

> for Puerto Ricans what happens "over there," happens "here". … With increased intensity over the decades, there has been an interpenetration of life and culture of the two "sides" of Puerto Rican social experience, its quality always defined and orchestrated as a result of political and economic decision-making at a transnational level.

The spatial idea of constantly shifting between here and there, both physically and mentally, connects well to the idea of travelling and transportation that embodies the Puerto Rican migrant's experience. Moreover, in Flores' (1993c, 193) opinion it is precisely the question of independence versus colonial "association" with the United States that dictates the Puerto Rican identity in the United States. Flores (1993c, 193) states further that the Nuyoricans with their "gathering of cultural consciousness" are turned more towards the first option.

Another poem that thematizes migration in *Red Beans* through immense geographical processes is "Corsica", only this time there occurs a union of tectonic plates rather than separation as in "Old San Juan". In "Corsica", Cruz ties the Mediterranean island to Puerto Rico through describing the Mediterranean migration into the Caribbean island. The poem starts with a powerful metaphor of belonging together, when the geologic plates are holding hands:

> Underneath with the geologic plates
> Puerto Rico and Corsica
> Are holding hands
> Both hands with gold rings
> Sweating each other's palms
> The same moon is seen
> From both islands
> (Cruz 1991, 42)

A similar picture of closeness occurs at the very end: "This is Corsica / Puerto Rico is in the Mediterranean / All the eyes are the same." (Cruz 1991, 43). When in "Old San Juan" the movement

of the island, or the act of breaking from its position, is presented as rather negative, and the flotation is depicted as something that the speaker of the poem cannot control, in "Corsica" the movement from the old world, or migrating to Puerto Rico, becomes a positive journey. In the poem, migration is depicted as a wholeness, the tectonic plates hold hands, it does not mean breaking ties to the old world, but rather bringing the old home with you, which finally results in the fusion of those two cultures into a novel hybrid culture, where ultimately "All eyes are the same" (Cruz 1991, 43). Puerto Rico's situation is then presented in these two poems from very different perspectives, which reflects the ongoing dichotomy of migration: on the one hand, migration might result in a positive blend of influences, but on the other it often means dislocation, disembarkation, rupture and an unbalanced and unpredictable state of in-betweenness that the here and there dichotomy stands for. Such a position results in the balancing act of living on the border for the Puerto Rican migrant.

Ultimately, the nomad migrant always crosses borders, sometimes back and forth. Such crossing borders, or "constructed boundaries between peoples, nations and individuals", is an essential part of a nomad's experience, and widely discussed in postcolonial literature and theory (Ashcroft et al. 2000, 25). The borderland, or the threshold near a frontier characterized by cross-cultural interaction, may serve as an area that enables positive change and so helps to "dismantle the binary systems which bring them into being" (Ashcroft et al. 2000, 25). As Ashcroft et al. (2000, 25) demonstrate, the Mexican-American border of the U.S. is a common example of a borderland, where there emerges thoroughly hybridized cultures, but also where in the U.S. point of view differences "rooted in racial, linguistic and economic factors" are seen as risks for the economy and safety of the country. As Flores (1992, 200) writes, Puerto Rico's position on the border of two cultures has led to a state of "cultural 'anomie'", or "a condition pertaining to neither" of those cultures. However, the border experience, as seen for instance in many Chicana/o writings, may also lead to cultural creativity and innovation and it may signify "not exclusion and denial, but inclusion and discovery", the borders may become crossable and "navigable" (Flores 1992, 200). Therefore, "Puerto Rican

culture" has become "a culture of commuting, of a constant back-and-forth transfer between two intertwining zones" (Flores 1992, 201). Moreover, what is interesting about the mystification of ancestral roots of Puerto Rico is that they are not, as Acosta-Belén (1992, 987) corroborates, buried somewhere in a far-away home country, but they are alive and present due to the proximity of Puerto Rico and the U.S. and the nonstop circulatory migration.

Soto-Crespo (2009, xii) insists that the connection, the "mainland passage", between the island and the U.S. mainland, constructs a cultural borderland of Afro-Latin and North American influences, which "extends beyond geographical borders". Due to the relatively cheap flights from San Juan to New York City, that passage was crossed by airplanes after the Second World War (Beardsley 2010, 156). In fact, a distinctive feature separating the Puerto Ricans from previous immigrants, according to Rubin and Melnick (2006, 92), was their arrival at New York City by airplanes through the skies, where also the idea of crossing borders is vague. Cruz too presents the borders many times in such an intangible way: "and walking to the border which has no beginning and no end" (Cruz 1991, 128). Moreover, Cruz (1991, 5-6) often incorporates the themes of airplanes and air travel in his writing as seen for instance in "The Bolero of Red Translation": "At four in the morning at five in the morning rented cars made journeys towards the airport where people charged towards the edge of the world and jumped off". In fact, from the 1950s, airplanes, airports and round-trip tickets increasingly started to appear in Puerto Rican literature, combining depictions of air migration with discussions of identity (Sandoval Sánchez 1997, 192). Since the travelling at that time was constant and intense, and the migration was characterized by circularity, the air migration becomes a metaphor of the migrant's identity "in flux" and "between one flight and the next one, between here and there" (Sandoval Sánchez 1997, 194). Moreover, the flight was a leap to a whole new world, and often the expectations of the travelers were unreasonably high: "We mounted a giant bird that was gonna take us to paradise" (Cruz 1991, 6). The airplanes and air travel then represent migration offering a new chance in life in a different location, but also the returning migration and the act of coming home, for the life across

the ocean did not always meet the expectations of the travelers. Air travel exposes the Puerto Rican migrant's identity, as Sandoval Sánchez (1997, 194) suggests, to continuous movement, "crisscrossing", "fragmentation" and "metaphorical nomadism and exile". Such an identity is a nervous condition where the feeling of homeliness is also compromised.

Once the migrant reaches the destination, the grand U.S.-American city, everything seems foreign: "A world of awesome gray velocity, an air of metallic coldness, a cement much more cemented than any which we had previously observed" (Cruz 1991, 6). Cement seems to be a recurring motif in Cruz's poetry. It appears in almost every poem that somehow describes the city. Often the red dust emitting dirt walks are contrasted to the cemented city streets, and the streets of the metropolis are regularly seen in a negative way in contrast to the rustic and picturesque home town, as for instance in "Snaps of Immigration" in *Red Beans*:

> Rural mountain dirt walk
> Had to be adjusted to cement
> pavement
> The new city finished the
> concrete supply of the world
> Even the sky was cement
> The streets were made of shit.
> (Cruz 1991, 13)

The passage highlights the migrant's efforts to conform to the new environment that seems to be built entirely of cold and colorless cement: even her/his gait must be attuned to match the needs of the city streets that ultimately are unpleasant to walk on. In the industrial metropolis, the migrant remembers her/his origins, the soil where the roots remain, as seen in "The Bolero of the Red Translation": "Images of industry collided with those of agriculture, but red earth remained in the mind" (Cruz 1991, 6). Moreover, red soil and the color red in general seem to be recurring poetic tropes in Cruz's poetry. Red soil, which is found in warm climates, denotes the tropical environment of Puerto Rico, and the frequent references to red soil and the juxtaposition of that earthy and natural substance to the "dead stone" could mean the longing for one's roots and original home and a respect for nature over the industrial metropolis. The color red might also reflect the references to "red skin" that settlers

applied to native Americans, a reference to the original inhabitants of the island, to whom the poet has a strong cultural attachment, and whom he respects and sympathizes with, as discussed a little later. These red metaphors in the middle of a city of cement could then be perceived as a source of comfort and as an expression of longing towards one's origins.

Another spatial metaphor that reinserts Puerto Rico into the city is the mountain, which is transformed into a building. Like cement, mountains as buildings are also a typical trope for Cruz's poetry, which is pictured for instance in the first stanza of the poem "Mountain Building" in *By Lingual Wholes*:

> The mountains have changed to buildings
> Is this hallway the inside of a stem
> That has a rattling flower for a head,
> Immense tree bark with roots made out of
> Mailboxes?
> In the vertical village moons fly out of
> Apartment windows and though what you
> See is a modern city
> (Cruz 1982[4]).

The passage presents the city as associated with nature and Puerto Rico. The buildings are not only mountains but also, they are transformed into flowers and trees, and in the stem there is a vertical village of different people living in their apartments. The speaker of the poem is evidently perplexed by the city, as indicated by the question mark after "Mailboxes?", and attempts to picture the city through his previous knowledge of the world. Through making such comparisons the speaker tries to make sense of the complexities of his surroundings, and perhaps get more comfortable with the modern city. The poem later suggests that the people have made the mountain building their home:

> The Moros live on the top floor eating
> Roots and have a rooster on the roof
> Africans import okra from the bodega
> The Indians make a base of *guava*
> On the first floor
> The building is spinning itself into a spiral of *salsa*
> (Cruz 1982)

[4] There are no page numbers in Cruz's collection *By Lingual Wholes*

The people have brought their traditions with them, here expressed through traditional food, which transforms the building into a homely place, where even new hybrid cultural forms like the salsa may come to life. The poem would suggest that by transporting one's traditions and culture into the new surroundings, the migrant is able to create a comfortable nook for herself/himself. The poem celebrates the diversity of cultures and traditions and does not encourage the idea of acculturation.

In "Home Is Where the Music Is" the mountain building is further emphasized with the cement element: "We went to the traditional immigrant neighborhood of New York – the Lower East Side, where the tenement buildings towered like magic over us. Had someone poured cement on the mountains, I wondered, recalling all those cement trucks back home" (Cruz 1997, 20). Pouring cement over mountains evokes an unnatural image, where nature is tarnished by the needs of the city. Furthermore, the poet seems to be worried about similar tarnishing being possible "back home". Another example of the dichotomy between nature and the city can be seen in the first stanza of "A Poem for DOWNTOWN":

> trees on the left
> from the right side
> trees
> miles of trees
> till concrete
> white walls hit
> your eyes
> (Cruz 1968, 17)

The trees, representing nature, are interrupted almost violently by the introduction of a concrete wall, which is characterized further in the second stanza as "dead stone / an attack / against the windows". Eyes are often seen as windows to one's soul, thus the dead stone walls hitting the eyes are felt in the very core of the speaker. Many of Cruz's poems, especially the ones describing the island, offer such ecocritical views, where often the indigenous people are seen to preserve nature's well-being, whereas the imperialistic ventures of the U.S threaten it.

Often such descriptions of Puerto Rico's tropical nature and the small rural towns come alive with vivid colors of fruits, plants, trees and houses. The importance of nature can be seen to have

heightened in Cruz's poetry especially after his return to Aguas Buenas, as Aparicio (2003, 161-162) has also noted. As already discussed, the color red is of importance, however, other colors seem to reoccur as well. Recurring elements are for instance trees, forests and leaves that are tied together by the color green, and the ocean with its blue hues is almost always present when Puerto Rico is described. Red covers the soil and dirt of the island and the skin of the natives. However, it is also frequently present in the gardenia flowers sprinkled in the greenery and brought to New York too, for instance in the hair of the migrant women, "still freshly posed in their waving black hair", as written in the essay "Salsa as a Cultural Root" (Cruz 1991, 96). Moreover, in "Home Is Where the Music Is", the poet describes the colorful brilliance of his native town, which stands in stark contrast to the "olfactory of steel, iron, cement, and glass" (Cruz 1997, 20) of the city: "The wooden house where I was born was painted a passion-fruit yellow, adding to the rainbow formed by all the houses on the street" (Cruz 1997, 17). The power of nature is also a distinctive feature in the poetry, there are for instance several poems about hurricanes. With the blooming and colorful nature, Puerto Rico becomes a place of life and fertility, whereas New York City is presented as the opposite: cold dead stone and urban decay. Moreover, picturing Puerto Rico with bright colors results in a somewhat romanticized picture of the island home, the mythical or "imaginary place", as Cruz calls it in "Three Songs From The 50's".

Somewhat similarly, lightness and darkness, and coldness and warmth, are constantly contrasted in the poems, which are according to Flores (1993c, 187) very typical binaries for migrant writers. In "Glow Flesh", written in 1966, the darkness of the city presents itself as something evidently dangerous:

> the hallways of east harlem
> the dark hallways of east harlem
> the dark hallways with mattresses
> of east harlem
> you are falling
> (Cruz 2001, 4)

The enjambments through the lines and repetitions of the dark hallways crammed with mattresses of perhaps homeless people create a dizzying image, which is at the end released through the dangerous act of falling. Moreover, in "The Mystery", written in 1966, darkness is acutely linked to negative feelings and loneliness, when the speaker of the poem has been wandering through the streets in the dark:

> walking all night
> into & out those ugly places/
> "Look man, look man, no light."
> why have you been there
> in the dark so long
> sometimes alone
> (Cruz 2001, 7)

Since in the poems New York City, the colonial center, is associated with darkness, whereas Puerto Rico in the periphery is the location of sun and light, Cruz dismantles the more typical binary of lightness/darkness, where lightness would rather characterize the western civilization and darkness would describe the threatening "Other" (Bertens 2014, 54-55). Moreover, since warmth is typically seen as the source of comfort and wellness, as for instance the warmth-emanating hearth evokes a homely image, Puerto Rico's warmness contrasted to the coldness, and especially the winter weather of New York, grounds Puerto Rico as the homely space in the poetry. Naturally winter must have felt strange and uncomfortable for the migrant from a tropical island. Thus, it is not so surprising that the longing for the warm weather is so strong in contrast to the cold New York air, as seen for instance in "The Land", written in 1966: "I freeze in New York / a native of a hot land" (Cruz 2001, 11). In the following passage from "Side 2" from Cruz's collection *Tropicalization* the speaker clearly longs for the warmth of his home country, while perched in the apartment with icy windows and radio broadcasting the chilly weather report:

> Out the window the window looking out
> At you and him and them
> Telling stories of the hot sun
> walking around half naked
> Suave moon lifting skirts
> …

In the mornings the subway
roars out of the inside of a
Red bean
the ice hugs the glass
Murray the K he says over radio
2 below zero outside.
(Cruz 1989, 72)

In the passage, there clearly is a community of people reminiscing about the hot sun and telling stories of the tropics, where people walk with less clothing and in the glow of the soft moon skirts are lifted. Although there are other people present, such a mention would possibly suggest the lack of physical contact in the city, where only the window is hugged by the ice. A similar picture is evoked in another poem "Side 22" in *Tropicalization*:

This is like living inside a refrigerator
trying to have thoughts
Wondering how lovely a woman's body is
through all those sweaters and coats
(Cruz 1989, 75)

The coldness is so immense that even brains are freezing and thoughts do not flow according to their regular routes. It should be noted, however, that the portrayal of women in Cruz's poems is at least somewhat limited to these fantasies of their bodies, which in my opinion is a weakness in his poetry. However, it is understandable that the female migrant's voice is not present in the poetry, for it is highly personal and obviously describes many events from the male poet's own life. In fact, some of Cruz's poetry and more clearly his essays are rather biographical in nature indicated by the direct references to his childhood, and the writing could to a certain extent be seen as one way of reconstructing the sense of self, naturally bearing in mind that such an interpretation has its risks.

Next, I will focus more closely on one of Cruz's more well-known poems, "The Lower East Side of Manhattan" in *Panoramas*, for this rather lengthy poem, consisting of 199 lines, is especially successful in the description of a migrant's life in New York City. Meanwhile, some other texts are also mentioned, for they support the ideas of certain recurring poetic themes in Cruz's writing. Already as a location, the Lower East Side epitomizes migration, since it is particularly known for

housing many immigrants from all over the world, today mainly from Puerto Rico and other Latin American countries (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 118). Cruz also grew up in the Lower East Side, or Loisaida, as it was called by the Puerto Ricans (Hernández 1997, 68). In the poem, Cruz (1997, 28) contrasts the area once belonging to the Native Americans, now built to house hundreds and hundreds of people:

> By the East River
> of Manhattan Island
> Where once the Iroquois
> canoed in style—
> . . .
> Now the jumping
> Stretch of Avenue D
> housing projects

The poem also draws attention to the fact that Manhattan too is an island, thus, bearing geographical similarity to Puerto Rico, which forms an interesting bond between these two localities. As an island, Manhattan becomes a floating locale, denoting movement as in the flow of migration to the city. Moreover, the entire poem is preoccupied by the passing of time and changes that the city has seen during its long history of immigration. In the area live the different migrant groups, "Ricans and Afros", and Jewish and Polish people that Cruz (1997, 28-29) introduces by describing a scene of flying through the streets, perhaps even making a leap in time, with a Jewish deli and Polish vendors, evoking an image of a centuries old intermingling:

> Pass the bites of pastrami
> Sandwiches in Katz's
> . . .
> Hebrew prayers inside
> metallic containers
> Rolled into walls
> . . .
> Along with a Polish English
> Barking peaches and melons
> Later the ice man a-cometh
> Selling his hard water
> cut into blocks

Although the Lower East Side is portrayed as a place where people with different backgrounds seem to live in harmony and in close contact, the longing for past becomes obvious in the following stanza:

> Where did the mountains go
> The immigrants ask
> The place where houses
> and objects went back
> Into history which guided
> Them into nature
> (Cruz 1997, 30)

Once again the mountains, the most obvious link to Puerto Rico's majestic nature are missed. The longing is then heightened by depictions of how the migrants, who left their home countries behind, still try to maintain the link to their old home by bringing with them whatever they could:

> People kept arriving
> as the cane fields dried
> Flying bushes from another
> planet
> Which had a pineapple for
> a moon
> Vegetables and tree bark
> popping out of luggage
> (Cruz 1997, 30)

Objects like vegetables and tree bark that the migrants carry from their home country to New York are fundamentally linked to nature, which yet again suggests that nature is one of the most important tropes that represents homeliness and comfort for the migrant. Moreover, references to luggage in Cruz's poetry are also frequent and they link the migrant experience to travelling and never fully settling down. Also, luggage evokes the sense of baggage, as in actual physical belongings, but also the mental burdens that people carry with them from one locality to another. The mental baggage might be both positive and negative, in the sense that it can denote for instance traditions and rituals important to the migrant that she/he strives to maintain, but also memories and experiences that are painful in one way or another, perhaps the baggage of displacement that haunts the migrant.

The act of moving is also present in the movement of time and the fast-paced life in the city. For Cruz (1991, 13), New York represents a place that surpasses temporal and geographical

boundaries, or a place where time has hastened and the entire rhythm of life has hastened, as for instance seen in his poem "Snaps of Immigration":

> We came in the middle of winter
> from another time
> We took a trip into the future
> A fragment of another planet
> To a place where time flew
> As if clocks had coconut oil
> put on them.

The profundity of the change that has taken place is apparent with the reference to another time that might reflect the faster development of the U.S.-American city in contrast to Puerto Rico. In the city, even time does not follow its usual course and since the city is seen to be as strange as another planet, the foreignness that the migrant experiences is extreme. The dichotomy between the city and the island is finalized with the idea of coconut oil, a trace of the tropic, lubricating the clock's mechanism. The fact that the entire concept of time has changed describes the immensity of the cultural clash that the migrant faces. The break between the old and the new world is intense, and the migrant needs to adopt an entirely novel perception of time and space and get used to the customs and habits of the new location. Moreover, the disunities of time and space can undermine the idea of a unified nation, which would suggest a more transnational way of perceiving things.

Moreover, in "The Lower East Side of Manhattan", the fastness of time is emphasized to the extreme:

> The Lower East Side
> was faster than the speed
> Of light
> A tornado of bricks
> and fire escapes
> In which you had to grab
> on to something or take
> Off with the wayward winds–
> (Cruz 1997, 33)

The fast life becomes something threatening and almost dangerous as it is contrasted to the powers of nature like tornadoes and unpredictable winds. The passage suggests that one should be constantly

on one's guard, for sudden threats in the city are imminent. At the end of the poem, the threats are realized. There appears a list of names and nicknames, most of them apparently Hispanic and known to the speaker, however, all have disappeared, eaten by the city:

> I knew Anthony
> and Carmen
> Butchy
> Little Man
> …
> Where are they?
> The windows sucked them up
> The pavement had mouths that
> ate them
> Urban vanishment
> (Cruz 1997, 34)

Ultimately the poem seems to criticize the hastiness of big cities like New York, for the quick passing of time is presented as something dangerous. One might interpret such "Urban vanishment" in a place where pavement and houses devour people as a metaphor for the threat of losing oneself in the big city: the migrants become lost people in the anonymous crowd. Similarly, it could denote also the constant marginalization of the Puerto Ricans in the city. A similar picture of the dangerous city appears also in "Side 24" from *Tropicalization*: "They say you gotta / Watch your step / On these loco streets" (Cruz 1989, 76).

The fast-paced city life is further discussed in the essay "Home Is Where the Music Is" as customary in the capitalistic worldview preoccupied by efficient production and maximization of profit, which is contrasted to the more relaxed pace in Puerto Rico:

> The campesino custom of the three o'clock cup still maintains its fanatics, unlike the custom of the siesta, the afternoon repose, which is fading in these regions: a rest during the day is bad for production. If they found you horizontal in bed at one-thirty in the afternoon in the northern longitudes, urbanities might christen you lazy, or worse, useless to the economy.
> (Cruz 1997, 12-13)

In the passage, the impersonal "they" likely refers to U.S.-American employers, who culturally do not understand the idea of an afternoon rest, which suggests yet another cultural conflict and a clear difference in the entire perception of time and diligence. It becomes apparent in the passage that in

the North there hardly is anything worse than being condemned as "useless to the economy" (Cruz 1997, 13). The person's worth is measured by her/his ability to work and be useful for the employer, the business and the economy at large. As discussed, many Puerto Rican migrants struggled with this perception of their supposed laziness and unprofitability. However, in "The Lower East Side of Manhattan" Cruz also presents a positive image of upward mobility of migrants, which offers a different story than the usual rhetoric of unemployment and hardships, which sadly was the case for many Puerto Rican migrants especially after the 1970s, as indicated by Flores (2000, 146). In the poem, the positive picture is painted by the following passage:

> Upward into the economy
> Migration continues–
> Out of the workers' quarters
> Pieces of accents
> On the ascending escalator
> (Cruz 1997, 31)

The regular workforce, migrants speaking in accents, climb up the social ladder by taking a ride on the "ascending escalator", which would perhaps denote an ascent to a corporate building and a different working environment. Thus, Cruz might challenge the dominant perception about the Puerto Rican migrant as a low-achieving subject and offer a hopeful alternative. However, this could be yet another example of the migrant's unrealistically high hopes when chasing after the American Dream, for the reality more than often did not offer such opportunities for the Puerto Rican migrants. In fact, in the next stanza in the poem an opposite downward motion appears:

> The red Avenue B bus
> disappearing down the
> Needle holes of the garment
> factories–
> The drain of a city
> The final sewers
> Where the waste became antique
> (Cruz 1997, 31)

If we interpret the "ascending escalator" taking a downward turn, as escalators eventually do, the next passage with the bus disappearing down to "The final sewers" would suggest that ultimately, the

migrant's place in the city is in the lowest possible rank, represented by the appalling sewers. Dowdy (2010, 56) expresses similar opinions about the passage and considers the downward pour of "moving bodies, buses, and waste" in the sewers to "conceal the consequences of migration and poverty", which is the reality in many U.S-American cities.

Moreover, in the poem not only does Cruz discuss the imbalanced development between North America and South America, but the disparities are also present within the United States, between the Northern and Southern states. The "broken Souths" in "The Lower East Side of Manhattan" serve as a metaphor of the Latino Souths and U.S. souths alike:

> Mississippi rural slang
> With Avenue D park view
> All in exile from broken
> Souths
> The horses the cows the
> chickens
> The daisies of the rural
> road
> All past tense in the urbanity
> that remembers
> The pace of mountains
> The moods of the fields.
> (Cruz 1997, 32)

The moods of the fields apply to both the rural U.S. Southern folk with their "Mississippi rural slang", exiled from their homelands, as well as to the tobacco and sugar fields of Puerto Rico. Moreover, later in the poem the "Urban vanishment" of the city comes to represent the poor people and migrants' vanishing from the rich people's eyes, as Dowdy (2010, 56) also argues. Living in their own neighborhoods, the rich do not see the struggles of the poor. In "Side 27" from *Tropicalization* the poverty and the poor housing situation is further emphasized with the description of a degrading house:

> So many windows have lost
> their power to hold back the wind
> Millions of bricks getting tired
> And sick beyond medicine
> (Cruz 1989, 78)

As stated earlier, the migrants with little financial means were often forced to live in such second-rate conditions, as described in the previous passage. In such poverty, the migrant often started feeling homesick, as seen in "Side 25" in *Tropicalization*: "Silver moon carry me home in your arms / I have nothing on me / Not a penny not a gun" (Cruz 1989, 77).

Finally, to conclude, the lush landscapes with all the beauty and pristine nature could be seen to represent only the surface of the longing of home for the poet. The more profound longing is in the way of life, the culture of the home island. Moreover, as Flores (1992, 197) states, one's national culture becomes paradoxically closer and clearer once one is physically and mentally distanced from that culture, a state that Flores calls the "emigrant consciousness". Interestingly, as Flores (1992, 197) suggests, many times the islanders are more North Americanized with their "continental values and flavors" than they realize, but continue to blame the Nuyoricans, who often are more diligent in fighting acculturation. Arguably, the Puerto Rican national identity has been shaped through the over 500-year-old history of colonial rule that the country has been subject to. Moreover, the uncertainty of the commonwealth status, its position of in-betweenness, reflects also the position of the U.S. Puerto Rican, "both inside and outside of U.S. domestic politics, with interests rooted equally in the struggles for justice and equality in the United States and in the struggles for sovereignty in the Caribbean and Latin America" (Flores 2000, 163). However, as Flores (1992, 199) states, recently people understand more and more that the question of identity is not "a question of division or unity, but of circulation and reciprocity". As Cruz (1997, 25) comments in "Home Is Where the Music Is", the migrant culture was in constant movement characterized by circulation: "Culture produced on the streets of New York would travel with the people in continuous reverse migration–there is something like an ongoing back-and-forth shift keeping those in the north resupplied with tropical resistance". However, Cruz also suggests that through the reverse migration, also the culture on the island got new flavors. For Cruz (1997, 120) then, Latino spaces are marked by "dislocation", "geoconfusion" and "territorial crisscrossings", fragmented and marked by variety and interchange.

Therefore, since the Puerto Ricans circulate between the two worlds, they have "simultaneously physical and spiritual access . . . to both cultural worlds" (Flores 1992, 200). Such a state of ambiguous national identity that cannot be imagined as something static is, according to Flores (2000, 213-214), often the case for Latino subjects. Since nations are fundamentally divided by imagined borders, it could be argued that by standing on the brink of both borders, Cruz undermines and dismantles the importance of national identity and advances to the more transnational understanding of identity. In the emerging border identity, the idea of separating the people from outside as different than the ones inside becomes elusive and vague. Still, coming back to the idea of distance, also the sense of home and belonging become more acute when one is distanced from the so-called original home.

4.2 Home and Belonging

The ideas of home and belonging are arguably among the very fundamental sources of security and comfort for any human being. Having a home and feeling a sense of belonging roots a person into a specific place, or shows her/his place in the world, which offers emotional stability and security (McLeod 2000, 210). The feelings of homelessness can be seen to define the experiences of every migrant at some point in their lives. However, usually that feeling is resolved by the recreation of home or the construction of a new sense of home in the new environment. How does a nomad then, constantly moving between places, construct a sense of home and belonging so important for the individual's well-being?

As Hall (1990, 236) states, the "narrative of displacement" epitomizes the Caribbean presence and therefore there is an "endless desire to return to 'lost origins'", which results in "the infinitely renewable source of desire, memory, myth, search, discovery" for the lost beginning. Esterrich (1998, 44) then argues that the Nuyorican poets' sense of home is often conflicted. Many of the poets see themselves somehow "coming from the island" and imagine it as their home, however, they often

have a “love hate relationship” towards their island, which sometimes evolves into an “idealizing project”, turning the island in their imagination into an almost utopian paradise, “intact and unpertubed” (Esterrich 1998, 44). Such qualities, as already discussed with, for instance, the tropicalizing and colorization of the island are also typical of Cruz’s poetry. The home then becomes a “mental construct” that emerges from the memory of the past times that are incoherently linked to the present (McLeod 2000, 210). Esterrich (1998, 44-45) even suggests that the Nuyorican poem itself indicate a state of denial about the loss of home, that “preserves the imperturbable concept of home intact”. Since the “original” home of the Nuyorican poet is lost “through exile or some other mechanism of cultural movement (such as transculturation, acculturation or assimilation)”, the poet denies the loss, but instead recreates the home as a fantasy (Esterrich 1998, 45). The fantasy is not, however, intact, but contains fractures, as Esterrich (1998, 45-46) demonstrates.

Esterrich (1998, 46) claims, such a combination of “the home/house with the island of Puerto Rico” is a common image of home in the Nuyorican poetry. In Cruz’s (1989, 66) poem “Aguadilla” a house with see-through walls represents the conflicted idea of home:

> We went to the house
> Across the nation
> The last people who went spoke of
> the house being invisible from the
> inside

Esterrich (1998, 46) then suggests that the idea of a “transparent” house could denote that the “home is the landscape itself”. Otherwise the poem paints a warm and lax atmosphere in a town where music is played, bananas chopped all afternoon and where “The weekend began on Thursday / and ended Monday night” (Cruz 1989, 67). Such positive and protective images happening “in or around the house” connect the home to the island more closely, as Esterrich (1998, 46) also maintains. However, in “Aguadilla” entering the house/home is problematized: “We can go into the house and not go” (Cruz 1989, 66). As Esterrich (1998, 46-49) argues, the idea of not being able to go could denote either not being able to go inside since the house for it is somehow out of reach or not being able to

leave the house once inside. Either way, the house/home becomes a complicated space. The ending of the poem would suggest that the house/home never was real, but only a symbolic construction for the yearning of home for the poetic "I":

> We turn around to look for the house
> But it is not there
> All we see is green rhythm coming
> to eat us
> (Cruz 1989, 67)

Esterrich (1998, 49) also suggests that such sudden "threatening images", like the hungry rhythm at the end, are common when the cracks in the home fantasy are revealed.

Moreover, in many of Cruz's poems the island-home in a way appears in New York City, like in "Los New Yorks":

> I am going home now
> I am settled there with my fruits
> Everything tastes good today
> Even the ones that are grown here
> Taste like they're from outer space
> (Cruz 2001, 52)

As Esterrich (1998, 46) points out, the effect of the deictic words "here" and "there" is interesting: a certain proximity of the home in the island, over there, to New York City, over here, is created regardless of the apparent distance between the two places. Still, the true home is considered to be there, in the island, not in the new setting with the strangely tasting fruit. Many times, the distance to the island is felt in a very tangible way, as in the poem "Snaps of Immigration":

> The past was dissolving like
> sugar at the bottom of a coffee cup
> That small piece of earth that
> we habitated
> Was somewhere in a television
> Waving in space.
> (Cruz 1991, 14)

The past is felt to seep through the fingers of the migrant where it ultimately becomes only a memory or a mere picture on the TV. However, the memory is very much alive in the incessant longing for

home. In the poem, the act of missing is connected to everyday life, which suggests that the longing is everywhere as seen in the following passage:

> When we saw the tenements
> our eyes turned backwards
> to the miracle of scenery
> At the supermarket
> My mother caressed the
> Parsley.
> (Cruz 1991, 13)

Amid finding housing or shopping for groceries one might be caught in the reminiscence of the home country's magnificent scenery or vegetation, here represented by the eyes turning backwards towards the island and the gentle caressing of parsley, a token of nature plucked away from its original surroundings and placed in the more artificial confines of a supermarket.

Moreover, in a poem about a migrant living out his childhood in the U.S. named after a children's television show character, "Clarabel the Clown", the dream or illusion of the original home gains a whole new meaning on a metalevel, since it is pictured through an actual dream during sleep:

> Falling asleep:
> dreams of immense tropical
> Flora,
> an ox I once saw,
> A waterfall caressing
> a mountain,
> Mangos the size of
> New York buildings
> all the pipes turn
> Into bamboo shoots.
> In that time ago
> which was once.
> (Cruz 2001, 281-282)

The passage reveals the longing for the tropical island with its vast nature, plants, animals, vistas and fruits. However, like regular dreams during the night, the dream and illusion of home here lacks realization. The speaker of the poem is aware of the tropic being located in the past, at a time "which was once". The previous examples then suggest that in Cruz's poetry the concept of home is often a reflection of the migrant's sense of home more in the pre-migratory location rather than the present

or future position. Such is also seen in "Home Is Where the Music Is", where the return to Aguas Buenas would mean a return to home:

> In our household there was a constant dialogue, debate, discussion, argument, fight between my mother and father as to when we would get back to Aguas Buenas. Originally the plan was that we would be in New York to work for a period, gather some money, and eventually work our way back *home*. Every year we would make plans to leave that never got beyond the motions of my mother starting to pack the luggage. Puerto Ricans perfected the art of packaging.
>
> (Cruz 1997, 23, my emphasis)

In the passage, it becomes evident that home is experienced to be in the small town of Aguas Buenas in the island, not in New York City. Here the possibility of a return to the place called home is present, although the return is not realized. In the last sentence of the passage, Cruz also subtly hints at the nomad identity of Puerto Rican migrants, which is characterized by movement, but also by the continuous state of in-betweenness.

The earlier discussed border life and in-betweenness then connect to the concept of home of a migrant that Cruz evokes in his works. As McLeod (2000, 214) writes, the situation "that *both* migrants and their children are deemed to occupy: living 'in-between' different nations, feeling neither here nor there, unable to indulge in sentiments of belonging to either place" means that the traditional ideas of home and belonging do not apply anymore, for they "depend upon clearly-defined, static notions of being 'in place', firmly rooted in a community or a particular geographical location". However, in the migrant's life, a static being and existence is more or less impossible, for the identity of the migrant and simultaneously her/his sense of belonging constantly transform, shift and fluctuate. Rather than being fixed to a place, the migrant often has to navigate between numerous places, or as McLeod (2000, 215) so neatly puts it: "The grounded certainties of *roots* are replaced with the transnational contingencies of *routes*". Thus, as McLeod (2000, 212) points out, although the migrant might be able to cross the "*political* borders of nations" at ease, the "*imaginative* borders" might be not so easy to pass. That is, if the migrant is greeted with hostility and disdain based on for instance ethnical or gender issues, making that place home becomes an arduously difficult a task. Therefore,

what is left for the migrant is to use the state of in-betweenness or the newly formed transnational home to her/his advantage, letting it inspire and strengthen her/him. As McLeod (2000, 216) puts it, "those who live 'in-between'" cannot accept the dominant narratives as representative of their position and identity, therefore, they need to come up with alternative narratives that offer tools to describe their unique sense of belonging and identity, which is what Cruz and other Nuyorican poets have attempted in their works.

For Said (2000, 182), the exiled "*feel* their difference (even as they frequently exploit it) as a kind of orphanhood" and also, in a way, the exiled "insists on his or her right to refuse to belong". Moreover, since the Puerto Ricans were between two places, and between two temporalities, their condition could be described as what Homi Bhabha (2004, 13) has defined as "unhomeliness" or "the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations". According to Bhabha (2004, 13), to be "unhomed" does not mean that one is homeless, but indicates a state of perplexity towards the surrounding world and one's place in it: "the borders between home and world become confused". In Caragol-Barreto's (2005, 10) opinion, the state of unhomeliness characterized especially the second-generation immigrants, who often had to struggle with idea of belonging to the "marginalizing Anglo-American society". Such literary themes of unhomeliness, as Bhabha (2004, 17) suggests, are perhaps the next international themes, where the focus has shifted from "'sovereignty' of national cultures" to displacement and otherness. Certainly, these themes can already be seen to circulate with increasing velocity in U.S. Puerto Rican literary expression.

The migrant's in-betweenness also mirrors the earlier mentioned ideas of the fragmented identity of postmodern subjects. As McLeod (2000, 216) states, the in-betweenness characteristic of the migrant experience, leads often to novel ideas about identity, "which go beyond older, static models, such as national identity and the notion of 'rootedness'". Homi Bhabha has certainly been an influential theorist when it comes to the thoughts of in-between migrant experience. For Bhabha (2004, 1) those who live "border lives" between two homelands, need to establish a new kind of "art

of the present", which means that they need to negotiate their identity anew in that contradictory and ambivalent border existence, which simultaneously works as a separating and joining existence. For Bhabha (2004, 1-2), the in-betweenness, or the "beyond" is where "we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion". What this means for the migrant is that in that in-between existence, the binaries, for instance here/there, native/outsider, that have previously dominated her/his life, become more unstable and are contested. The result is a hybridized identity, as postulated by for instance Bhabha (2004) and Hall (1990), that goes beyond traditional ideas of stable or fixed identity, and is instead a compilation of various influences and sources. Such an identity is characterized by movement, evolution and transformation, or as McLeod (2000, 219) puts it, hybrid identities have served "as a way of thinking beyond exclusionary, fixed, binary notions of identity based on ideas of rootedness and cultural, racial and national purity".

One example of such hybrid identity in terms of culture and race is subtly put forward in Cruz's poem "Red Beans". Already the title of the poem seems like a reference to one of his earlier poems "Red Beings", which would most likely point towards Taínos or other indigenous "red-skinned" people. In the poem consisted of eight stanzas of two to four lines each, words somehow connected to the colors red and white flow from one line to the other, forming an intricate web of those colors. For instance, in the first two stanzas the colors denoting red (coral, sienna) and white things (white, snow, starch) skip between lines:

> Next to *white* rice
> it looks like *coral*
> sitting next to *snow*
> Hills of *starch*
> border
> The burnt *sienna*
> of irony
> (Cruz 2001, 161, emphasis mine)

Other words in the poem that denote red are for instance "terra cotta", "lava", "red", "Ochre" and "Red beans", whereas white things are "white mounds", "ivory", "blanc pebbles" and "milk".

Furthermore, there is a mention of "Azusenas", which is the Spanish word for lilies, which are typically either red or white. Already the association of the colors suggest a hybrid mixture, however, the pinnacle moment is an explicit mixing of those two colors: "Red beans and milk / make burgundy wine" (Cruz 1991, 161). As already stated, the red beans could be seen as the "red beings". Therefore, if we consider the color white to represent skin color too, we might want to read this moment as a mixture of colors or races, which describes the Puerto Rican collisions of culture, where divergent things might come together to form something rather rich and radiant like the "burgundy wine".

The previously mentioned example relates to the idea of the migrant's in-betweenness in a broader sense, which is once again a positive location where novel forms of emancipatory identities become available. Thus, as Flores (1992, 201) puts it, the Nuyorican experience shows that it is possible to "struggle through the quandary of biculturalism and affirm the straddling position", that is not being both New Yorker (or North American) and Puerto Rican, but being neither and rather creating a new denomination and identity for oneself, Nuyorican, who speaks her/his own language and perceives the world in their own way. As Rutherford (1990, 24-25) theorizes, the sense of belonging or home in the postmodern world might only be found in oneself, that is, in the "sense of selfhood" and only when a "sense of personal integrity" is discovered. Such an idea is also visible in "Root of Three" in *Islandis*, where the speaker walks through different places with a body consisting of different parts of her/his identity, or as Dowdy (2010, 54) calls them, "topographical, cultural, and historical markers of identity":

> I walk in New York with a mountain
> in my pocket
> I walked in Puerto Rico with a guitar
> in my belly
> I walked in Spain with Mecca
> in my sandals
> (Cruz 1989, 149)

If belonging and identity is portable, as the poem might suggest, then it seems to be possible to live a life with a combination of different identities as suggested later in the poem:

I walk New York with a fan
in my pocket
Made with the feathers
of three continents
It blows African feet
It blows Spanish heart
It blows Taíno head space
I am three in one
(Cruz 1989, 149-150)

In Dowdy's (2010, 54) view the "speaker synchronizes in one body African, Spanish, and indigenous ways of being, seeing, and feeling, suggesting that to embody many cultures is to have *many* places". The Puerto Rican or Nuyorican identity that arises from Cruz's poetry is thus embodied with constant movement and such movement often suggests a certain lack of place, or home, however, in Cruz's case it might rather suggest an access to many places, and many identities, all at once.

In Cruz's poetry, the problematic condition of home extends through space and time, that is, both the past home and the present one become complex for the migrant. However, the blending of the Puerto Rican traditions and imagery with the reality of New York might provide a sense of belonging in that time and place, for the migrant carries the home with her/him in the traditions and memories and creates new conceptions of home based on those memories. Therefore, the myth and dream of the original home might become the healing power for the fragmented, in-between self. Perhaps the home that Cruz constructs in his poetry is then the writing itself, for as Esterrich (1998, 50) suggests, the language resembles the closest connection to home for the Nuyorican poet, for "the poet tries to reinsert himself into the home through the invocation of Spanish words".

5. Language

This chapter will illustrate the importance of language and more precisely linguistic mixing for Cruz's poetry, or as he calls it in his essay "The Home Is Where the Music Is" a "coming together" of the two languages "giving a multiple choice of sounds to select from for objects, experiences, emotions, sensations" (Cruz 1997, 21). I will firstly discuss in section 5.1 the importance of language to the subject's identity and thereafter in section 5.2 I will introduce Spanglish as a language variety spoken in the United States. Instead of providing a comprehensive linguistic analysis on Spanglish, however, the main focus will be on the use of the language variety as a literary device, and on the way in which it is used to construct identity and describe the migrant's experience in Cruz's poems. The previously mentioned aspects will be discussed in section 5.3.

5.1 Language and Identity

As Cruz (1997, 118) writes, language is an essential part of every human being and it occupies both the entire human body and its natural surroundings:

> Language comes from the feet to the mouth. It is felt in one's shoes as well as in one's belly–it comes from inside and outside, an atmospheric condition. It is inside of trees and in the glass windows of buildings, in the eyes and in the waves. It is pantomime and speculation, walk and dance, …

Therefore, as Hall (1997a, 1) points out, language is one of the most important constituents that constructs meaning in a culture: it operates as a "*representational system*" and mediates through signs and symbols "our concepts ideas and feelings". Moreover, language is something social, not individual, and the act of speaking a language triggers the "vast range of meanings which are already embedded in our language and cultural systems" and in the same way that we cannot "fix meaning" in a language, it is impossible to fix the meaning of someone's identity (Hall 1992, 288).

As Cohen (2008, 423) points out, people use language to "legitimize, challenge and negotiate particular identities". This means that whenever a person communicates with another person using language, the imposed identities of the speakers will be affected by the language they use, regardless

of whether the interpretation is correct or not. For instance, grammatical errors may lead one to think that the speaker is uneducated or the choice of vocabulary may associate the speaker with a certain group of people (Cohen 2008, 423). Therefore, as Cohen (2008, 424) puts it, "The positioning, whether directly or indirectly, positive or negative, by the dominant language group leaves a profound mark on the individual's identity". In other words, the way in which the English-speakers in the U.S. position themselves for example towards the Spanish-speakers, will immediately affect the identities of the minority language group's members, and perhaps that is why many will lose their ability to speak their heritage language, since they desire to rid themselves of the language's imposed negative identity and rather be part of the valued dominant group. Moreover, since the dominant language group also enjoys its position and strives to maintain it, the minority language group will be considered the "other", which often affects negatively the minority group's opportunities, as Cohen (2008, 424) mentions. However, if the individuals negotiate their identities, or for instance decide to maintain their heritage language and culture and only choose to conform to the norms of the mainstream society that suit them, the result will be proud bilinguals, who are also more likely to succeed in the society than the ones who abandon their heritage culture (Cohen 2008, 424). Therefore, Cruz's choice to use both English and Spanish in his poems can be perceived as a defiant act against the hegemonic role of English, with the identity he is attempting to negotiate being that of a proud bilingual.

As Acosta-Belén (1992, 987-988) confirms, the Spanish language, or any other minority language in the U.S., has suffered under for instance the "U.S. English Only Movement", for often "cultural and linguistic differences that go beyond those that are folkloric, picturesque or culinary" are rejected by the "Anglo-American ethnocentrism and racism". Instead, the dominant society hopes that the immigrant will assimilate to the society, and losing one's vernacular language is a step to such a direction (Acosta-Belén 1992, 988). However, as Acosta-Belén (1992, 988) notes, if one uses the mainstream language more than one's native language, it does not necessarily mean that one is

wholly assimilated and has lost one's national identity or culture, as for instance in the English-speaking Jamaicans' case. One can still differentiate oneself from the dominant culture, for instance by "creative bilingualism, characterized by the use of everyday, street, or coarse language and code-switching" (Acosta-Belén 1992, 988). Cruz (1997, 22) addresses the issue of language and identity in his essay "Home Is Where the Music Is" as follows: "Consequently it is through words that we fulfill our personalities. Without a strong linguistic spine, we could fold into a mush of blah-blah". This would suggest that also his choice of language, or languages, in his writing is well thought out and deliberated.

According to Remeseira (2010, 6) already the second-generation Puerto Rican immigrants in the U.S. are often English-dominant and their children consequently speak even less Spanish. However, since the interaction within the Latino communities is so frequent and the migration from the island is constant, the cultural traits, including the language, survive. Moreover, Spanish with its different kind of speakers with diverse dialects and accents serve as a bonding mechanism for the various Hispanic groups and help them to form a common identity (Remeseira 2010, 6).

5.2 Spanglish in the United States

As McLeod (2000, 26) maintains, one typical way to challenge the "colonial value-system" in postcolonial literatures is the altering and defying of standard English, for instance by mixing other languages with it. One variety of linguistic mixing, which certainly plays an important role especially in the United States, is Spanglish, or the blending of English and Spanish languages "in oral and written production" (Rosas 2008, 767). The varieties of Spanglish, also called *espanglish* or *espanglés*, may be considered both as varieties of Spanish with an intense use of English or vice versa (Betti 2011, 41-42). However, for instance in mainland Puerto Rico, Spanglish is typically known as "English-influenced Spanish" and the other version, the Spanish-influenced English would there be called *Englañol* (Ardila 2005, 67). As Ardila (2005, 65) demonstrates, deciding how to characterize

Spanglish from a linguistic point of view is not simple, therefore, it could be described as an "interlanguage, a Spanish dialect, a Creole language, or pidging language". For the purposes of this work, Spanglish will be discussed as dialectal variation, and in terms of region, only the United States is under scrutiny.

As indicated by Dumitrescu (2012), the term *Spanglish* was "coined by the Puerto Rican journalist Salvador Tió in the mid-fifties". However, as a linguistic phenomenon it is much older than that. As a matter of fact, the interaction between the English and Spanish languages developed already with the purchase of what today is Florida from Spain in the early 19th century (Bazán-Figueras and Figueras 2014, 264). The contact intensified during the Mexican-American war in the mid 19th century, increased further during the 19th and 20th century with the immigrants from various Spanish speaking countries, and as already discussed, has expanded tremendously during the past few decades. This has made the U.S. "the fifth largest Spanish speaking country"[5] before even such Latin American countries as Peru and Chile (Ardila 2005, 62). Interestingly, Spanglish is then considered to be "the most important contemporary linguistic phenomenon in the United States", but only from the U.S.-American viewpoint, since from the Spanish language perspective the variety is "barely recognized in the Spanish-speaking world" (Ardila 2005, 62). Although an important phenomenon, Spanglish is not the only Spanish language variety found in the United States, as sometimes is erroneously believed (Dumitrescu 2012). Nevertheless, Spanglish serves as a bonding mechanism for many Hispanics in the USA, regardless of the country of origin of its speakers (Bazán-Figueras and Figueras 2014, 262-263).

It needs to be noted that already the name Spanglish has historically caused much controversy in the academic world and there are many critics who do not believe it to be an appropriate word for the linguistic mixing in question, but would rather prefer terms such as *code switching* or *popular*

[5] In 2015, the U.S. became already the second largest Spanish-speaking country after Mexico, as demonstrated in a study by the esteemed Spanish institute, Insituto Cervantes (Burgen 2015).

Spanish of the USA (Dumitrescu 2012; Otheguy and Stern 2010; Rosas 2008). Some critics go as far as regarding Spanglish as a "deformed and corrupted Spanish" and connect it to people of low-class or low-education (Ardila 2005, 65). Some would also prefer to keep the languages separate, for they fear that phenomena like Spanglish will harm the vast Hispanic community of the United States and their employment opportunities and opportunities in life in general (Otheguy and Stern 2010, 96). Other critics of Spanglish also blame the speakers for being somehow linguistically and cognitively incompetent and lacking the skills in one of the two source languages (Rosas 2008, 768). Cruz reflects such a view in his essay "Home Is Where the Music Is" where the teacher discourages any intrusion of Spanish into the English-dominated language environment of the classroom:

> In the public schools the teachers prohibited the use of Spanish among the recently arrived island children. They would say, "Shusssh-hush, speak in English. It's what's going to get you ahead." Or they'd say, "You're in America now." Looking out of the window, we knew we were on the East Side, an aspect of America.
> (Cruz 1997, 23)

The passage also highlights the irony of supporting English on the basis of being in "America", when actually America is mostly Spanish-speaking and it is only North America that holds English so dearly.

Nevertheless, many do believe that Spanglish is "a valid form of communication" and "reflects the bilingual reality of its users", and it is in fact as rule-governed as any other language variety (Rosas 2008, 767-768). It is also rather close-minded to judge its speakers and their abilities in the languages, since mixing two languages successfully and processing them simultaneously takes arguably a lot of skill and knowledge of the two varieties in question, as pointed out by Troike (2008, 145). The bilingual speaker knows how to maneuver between the languages, they know when to switch and mix and how to coin new words, which is a proof of their efficiency and the rule-driven nature of the language. However, perhaps the critique of the name Spanglish is justified, as Otheguy and Stern (2010) propose, since it might lead some to believe that it is a language rather than a language variety. Nevertheless, it is good to keep in mind that the Hispanic population of the U.S. is

very heterogeneous also in the "mastery and the use of the Spanish language": that is, although almost 90% speak some Spanish, the level of competence in both English and Spanish vary in multiple ways (Ardila 2005, 62-63). However, the fact that there are so many types of speakers of the two languages is partly the reason for the creation of a variety like Spanglish (Ardila 2005, 63).

As Rosas (2008, 768) notes, dialectal variation is typical of all languages and languages may be affected by for instance the gender, class or region of its speakers. In Spanglish, especially the regional variation is evident, since Spanglish is spoken all around the U.S. and the Spanglish spoken in for instance Texas, Florida and New York City all have their unique traits and vocabulary and are not necessarily mutually intelligible (Rosas 2008, 768; Ardila 2005, 62-63). As Ardila (2005, 64) points out, many interlanguages, like Spanglish, are born near a linguistic border, where two languages come into particularly close contact. However, what makes Spanglish distinctive is, as Ardila (2005, 64) notes, that it does not solely occur on a linguistic border, like the Mexican-American border, but rather "the 'border' is everywhere in the United States".

The reasons for speaking Spanglish are as multiple as its speakers, however, oftentimes the motive to switch into Spanglish depends on the interlocutors of the conversation (Rosas 2008, 768). If a bilingual speaker is engaged in a conversation with another bilingual, who speaks both English and Spanish, it is likely that some blending will occur, whereas if the other speaker were a monolingual, the bilingual speaker will more likely continue speaking in either English or Spanish (Rosas 2008, 768). Other such factors that govern the choice of language are for instance the topic of the conversation, the physical setting, the emotional value of the topic for the speakers, the people around them and the desired effect the Spanglish may have upon those people (Rosas 2008, 768; Troike 2008, 144). Spanish may also be spoken for instance with the family and Spanglish with the community at large, therefore, keeping the two languages separate and reserved for certain situations (Ardila 2005, 61). Moreover, the relationship between Spanish and Spanglish could also be seen as a

diglossic one, where Spanish would be the "higher" variety reserved for more official interactions and Spanglish the "lower" variety used in more informal contexts (Ardila 2005, 66).

Nevertheless, as Ardila (2005, 63) maintains, Spanglish words and phrases arise according to "specific social needs and circumstances", which means that the language variety is in constant flux, changing and altered to match the needs of its speakers. Spanglish may even serve as a bridge between Spanish and English for the Hispanic immigrants helping them in their "process of acculturation" (Bazán-Figueras and Figueras 2014, 264). However, since Spanish is seen as a low language in the United States, regardless of its high status elsewhere in the Americas, Spanglish as a variety of Spanish is considered a low variety (Sung 2008, 802). Moreover, the majority of Spanglish speakers are youngsters or working class, which further diminishes its prestige (Sung 2008, 802). Still, as indicated by Stavans (2003, 43), the variety is used in various situations and by people ranging from migrant workers to congressmen.

Supporters of Spanglish, like Ed Morales, view the variety nevertheless as a positive creation, describing the hybrid culture of the Hispanics in the U.S.: "Spanglish is what we speak, but it is also who we Latinos are, and how we act, and how we perceive the world" (Morales 2002, 3). Morales (2002, 5) suggests that Spanglish allows its speakers even to subvert the powerful black and white binary, which has traditionally dominated the discourse in the U.S.: "Spanglish is about not having to identify with either black or white, while at the same time having the capacity to "be" both. We can even be both Hispanic and Latino." Spanglish allows its speakers to forge new selfhoods, since according to Morales (2002, 6-8) Spanglish is "a fertile terrain for negotiating a new identity", or having "at least two identities at the same time, and not being confused or hurt by it". Morales (2002, 7) even connects Spanglish to the sense of displacement and describes it as a "very universal state of being" where the person is displaced from "one place, home, to another place, home, in which one feels at home in both places, yet at home in neither place". The speaker is then encouraged to forget the sense of fragmentation and instead "embrace the transitory (read transnational) state of in-

between" (Morales 2002, 7). Therefore, Spanglish is as a literary device yet another facet of the transnational selfhood that Cruz conveys in his poetry.

Originally thought of as mainly an oral form of communication, Spanglish has slowly started to be used in written form, for instance in street signs and advertisements, and gradually it has also started to appear more and more in "high culture", that is, literature (Bazán-Figueras and Figueras 2014, 263). In fact, Spanglish has been a powerful literary device for many Hispanic writers, who have tried to subvert the power of English in their literary works by, for instance, mixing Spanish into mainly English writing (Alvarez 2013, 444). One well-known group of these writers were surely the Nuyorican poets and among them Victor Hernández Cruz.

5.3 Spanglish and Identity

As Bazán-Figueras and Figueras (2014, 263) note, Nuyorican Spanish is a Puerto Rican variety of Spanglish spoken "in and around New York City", and it is in fact one of the earliest variants of Spanglish. Moreover, The Nuyorican Poets Café served as "the first institution to openly embrace and accept this hybrid of the Spanish language" (Bazán-Figueras and Figueras 2014, 263). Victor Hernández Cruz writes in English and mixes Spanish into his mainly English poems, or as Esterrich (1998, 50) calls it, uses English as his "base language" and inserts Spanish words in the text to "reinsert himself into the home". According to Flores (1993b, 151), during the 50s and 60s the Nuyorican writers started to write in English, which was one of the most significant changes to the earlier writings about Puerto Rican migration. As Flores (1993b, 151) states, English was used as "a sign of being here, not necessarily of liking it here or of belonging" and, therefore, the writing in English should not be seen as a sign of assimilation or acculturation. For these writers also, the Spanish language remains as a "key language-culture of reference", even if English is mainly used instead (Flores 1993b, 151). What is more, the particular bilingualism present in so much of Nuyorican literature renders it ambiguous in the sense that it is hard to determine its place in the

literary field: it is not Puerto Rican per se, but cannot be "assessed on the basis of a strict English-language conceptualization of 'American' literature" (Flores 1993b, 151-152). However, Cruz sees his poetry written in English as part of the "North American literary landscape". Thus, when he writes in English, he sees himself as a North American author, but when his writing is in Spanish, he considers himself a Latin American writer (Hernández 1997, 65). The Nuyorican literature is about "'mingling and sharing'" with the other minority literatures like Afro-American and Chicano writing of its time, and about "straddling … between two national literatures" (Flores 1993b, 152). Such mingling is seen in Cruz's poetry too, where for instance different oral and non-standard forms of language are frequent and some language use resembles that of, for instance, African American vernacular. The oral tradition is moreover an important factor in the entire Nuyorican movement, which encourages the poems to be spoken aloud rather than just read in silence. Moreover, already the Puerto Rican Spanish is a mixture of references, a blend of its own: "When I write in Puerto Rican Spanish … I am writing in a language which has Taino, Arabic-Gypsy-Berber, and African words" (Cruz 1997, 22). The Nuyorican variant of Spanglish then is immensely rich in its cultural sources.

Typical ways of code switching and -mixing between the Spanish and English are for instance either switching inside a sentence or between sentences, from which the former type is arguably a more interesting one in a grammatical point of view, for there is an interaction between the grammars of the two languages (Troike 2008, 143). A passage from Cruz's "Back to / Back to" in *Snaps* serves as an example of mixing between sentences, or in this case between lines:

> hey hey
> what's happening
> que pasa
> o new walls
> talking loudly
> o monday is o.k.
> monday is o.k.
> (Cruz 1968, 13-14)

The expression "que pasa" actually doubles the meaning of the previous line "what's happening". Such repeated overlappings or doublings, supports the idea that the languages are processed

simultaneously, as Troike (2008, 145) notes. As a literary device, such doubling comes to describe the way a bilingual person thinks, often translating and processing the two languages at the same time. Other typical ways of mixing are for instance a heavy use of English lexical items such as international terms or substitutions of high-frequency words in otherwise Spanish utterances, or vice versa, or the modification of English words to resemble the morphology of Spanish words (Ardila 2005, 66). Cruz employs all of these techniques in his writing with different effects. Sometimes the bilingualism is very delicate in his poetry, as for instance in "Was Is" in *Red Beans*, where there is only a single Spanish word, the word *blue*, slipped into one of the lines: "Of *azul* waters rising" (Cruz 1991, 76, my emphasis). Other times only the name of the poem is in Spanish, when the rest of the poem is in English, having a rather defamiliarizing effect, as in "Tradición", meaning *tradition* (Cruz 1991, 41), and "Libros", meaning *books* (Cruz 1991, 51). In "Yjuanas" from *Panoramas* the word "azul" and "blue" are both used: "Some with splashes of azules and pinks, / Around their waist a Matisse of blue" (Cruz 1997, 90). Cruz (1997, 128) describes such insertions in his essay "Writing Migrations" as follows: "Singular foreign words appearing in any poetic tradition are like beauty marks upon the body. In the courtyard gardens a rosa appears." Such small fragments like individual words of foreign languages appearing in the English text can certainly be seen to serve as beauty marks. They tropicalize the language and give it a fresh flavor while simultaneously they perform as the markers of the bilingual identity of the poem's speaker.

One example of how Spanglish serves to foreground a certain migrant experience could be read in "Side 1" in *Tropicalization*, where not only Spanish words are inserted, but also the grammar of the language is compromised:

> Me go in plane traffic
> drinking Cola-Champaign la original
> Floating
> everytime I come to giant city
> Hear tambores
> inside New Yorks flying
> (Cruz 1989, 71)

The poem's language is deformed as seen in the first line with the ambiguous "Me go in plane traffic", which is a rather cryptic line. The line is ungrammatical due to the use of the object pronoun "Me" instead of a regular subject pronoun "I", and for the line to be grammatical, it should read something like "I am going by plane". Moreover, Spanish grammar sneaks into the second line with the article "la" in front of the word "original", which is the same word in both English and Spanish, and in the fifth line the Spanish word "tambores" appears instead of the English word *drums*. It could be argued that such deformation of English and the Spanish words appearing in the poem lead to an interpretation that the poem is describing the migrant's initial stage in the new country, when the difficulties with languages are common. Such an interpretation is supported also in the poem "From the Secrets I" in *Mainland*, a fragmented poem describing New York, where the migrant's experience with language comes vivid: "Thoughts in Spanish run through / the mind / The buildings speak broken English" (Cruz 1989, 50). Cruz often uses such broken English in his poems perhaps to illustrate more authentically the migrant's strain with language.

Such use of language where the Spanish and English easily flow from one to the other and widen the expressive value of the poem is also present in "Puerta Rica" from *Islandis*. The poem is full of little word games starting with the name of the country Puerto Rico meaning a *rich port* changed into "Puerta Rica", which denotes a *rich door*. The poem also plays with the word "free" throughout the first twenty lines as in the beginning "Free Puerto Rico / Puerto Rico free / Puerto Rico for $12.50" (Cruz 1989, 146). It seems to demand the liberation of Puerto Rico from the imperialist superior that abuses the island, while it also enjoys the amusements the island has to offer, as suggested near the end of the poem:

> Puerto Rico as
> abusement
> As absent from your center of discussion
> Puerto Rico as amusement
> (Cruz 1989, 147)

The poem ends with a suggestion of an escape through that rich door, which is also reflected in the following passage at the end of the poem:

> Estudy new ways
> not freeways
> out of town
> (Cruz 1989, 147).

Although the word "Estudy" is understandable for the monolingual reader, it still is a case of morphosyntactic hispanization of English. Here the Spanish verb *estudiar* is mixed with the English word with the same meaning, *to study*, and the result is a new hybrid word "Estudy". Such hybrid words assembled from Spanish and English elements are according to Ardila (2005, 71) very typical for Spanglish. In "Puerta Rica" the mixing of the two languages is nevertheless more subdued, which increases the power of the individual words that do display some sort of blending.

However, sometimes the mixing of the two languages is more profound as in "Nebraska" in *Mainland*, where English and Spanish intermingle so closely that they become apparent Spanglish:

> Que Pasa?
> Y los palos
> do you not feel at home any more
> La luna
> goes round the star dotted cielo
> Let's watch
> In this part of Mexico
> Se habla inglish.
> (Cruz 2001, 64)

In this poem, to avoid total defamiliarization, the reader has to have some knowledge of Spanish. In the poem, the mixing occurs in both levels: intersententially and intrasententially, and very typical English words like *trees*, *the moon* and *the sky* are switched to Spanish equivalents, which renders the mixing profound. The use of Spanglish in a literary work can be very empowering for the writer, as Alvarez (2013, 444) demonstrates, since by inserting Spanish into an otherwise English work, it will let "the monolingual English-speaker assume the position of a marginalized subject in their own language", which is a very unfamiliar position for an English-speaker. In such a way, the power-structure of English and Spanish is reversed. As Martínez (2006, 27) explains the use of Spanglish in

Tato Laviera's poetry, Cruz also legitimizes Spanglish for his community, he legitimizes the people who speak it by using Spanglish and not explaining or translating anything to the reader. This is especially important, since the idea of "the standardisation of *one unitary language*" is one of the features that has traditionally defined the imagined nation (McLeod 2000, 72). Therefore, the use of such an interlanguage challenges any traditional view of a nation.

In Cruz's *By Lingual Wholes*, a collection that already in its playful title suggests that something complete can be reached by the interaction of more than one language and culture, the prose poem "Grafo-Mundo" is written in its entirety in Spanish, or at least the remains of Spanish, for the syntactically incoherent poem flows in a state of unpunctuated stream of consciousness. The poem is then followed in the collection by another, very short poem titled "Translation:", which goes as follows: "*Grafo-Mundo*: Graphic World. Picture it." (Cruz 1982). If we consider the poem "Translation:" as a translation of the previous poem, it really puts the monolingual reader in a difficult position. If "Grafo-Mundo" is read by a monolingual reader, the poem is left unintelligible and the following "Translation:" seems to mock the monolingual reader: Go ahead, picture it! Thus, bilingualism, or at least understanding both languages, becomes an enormous advantage, while reading the "Grafo-Mundo" and the following "Translation:". If read in such a way, "Grafo-Mundo" and "Translation:" transform the English monolingual reader to, what Alvarez (2013, 446) has called, an "outsider or a foreigner in their own language" who "feels like the minority", whereas the bilingual reader will become the "insider". The power of English is thus destabilized.

In the prose poem "If Chickens Could Talk" in *By Lingual Wholes* there is a passage that reflects the everyday Spanglish that occupies the migrant's mind: "He walked down the street with the beautiful chicken and the populace wondered, Fried / boiled / fricassee I *no se* I no said *Ay no say* can you see the wings flapping?" (Cruz 1982). Such language is typical for Cruz, who often emphasizes the creative power of playing with the two languages. In the passage the Spanglish expressions mixing the English subject pronoun "I" with Spanish "*no se*" meaning *I don't know* transforms through an

ungrammatical English sentence “I no said” to the “*Ay no say* can you see”, which likely is an intertextual reference to the U.S. National Anthem starting “O, say can you see”. Cruz (1997, 23) alludes to the National Anthem also in his essay “Home Is Where The Music Is”, where he recounts an incident in his childhood for getting into trouble for singing the Anthem accidentally as “José can you see”. Although an amusing incident, such occurrences also reflect the struggles of a second language learner. Similar thoughts are expressed for instance in “Snaps of Immigration” from *Red Beans*:

> At first English was nothing
> but sound
> Like trumpets doing yakity yak
> As we found meanings for the words
> We noticed that many times the
> Letters deceived the sound
> What could we do
> It was the language of a foreign land.
> (Cruz 1991, 14)

Cruz emphasizes the foreignness of the new language, where at first nothing makes sense and even when slowly one starts to find meaning for the words, they are still written differently than pronounced. One can read the apparent alienation of the migrant in the city, since the language is described as “language of a foreign land”. In that foreign position, however, the migrants started experimenting with the English language and deformed it to suit their purposes, as described in “Home Is Where the Music Is”: “The Lower East Side was full of accents. English waved, leaned, flew, got squashed, shredded, sautéed, made into puree. Italian, Polish, Jewish thoughts danced their own angles into Shakespeare” (Cruz 1997, 21).

Cruz (1991, 105) describes his own experiences with bilingualism in his essay “Taos: The Poetry Bout Codrescu vs. Cruz” from *Red Beans* as follows:

> My own accent out of the Spanish has its moods. It starts leaning toward Spanish at night. There are conscious moments when I try to charge into the English like Sir Lancelot and fill all the curves of its letters, take those syllables with coconut oil.

It is as if one had to lubricate one's throat with coconut oil, a metaphor denoting the tropical Puerto Rico, to be able to speak English. The passage highlights the sometimes arduous reality of a bilingual, when from time to time speaking a second language feels like a fight, and at night when the mind is at its leisure, resting and vulnerable, the first language becomes more comfortable. Moreover, Cruz (1991, 105) emphasizes the constant need for translation, the mental process that is inevitable in the migrant's head:

> Now that I am back in the U.S. of A. I am engulfed by English, so my Spanish stands up inside; phrases sail across in slow motion. Every time I hear English I give myself an immediate translation into Spanish. An accent is the lingering memory of the tongue true to its first formations, something that pulls back through the saliva to original utterances.

As Hall (1997b, 22) maintains, when negotiating between cultures and languages, it is important to "know how concepts and ideas translate into different languages, and how language can be interpreted to refer to or *reference* the world." Meaning and the codes that we use to negotiate between systems of representation change between cultures and between periods of time, therefore, what becomes inevitable is the act of translation "as we move from the mind-set or conceptual universe of one culture to another" (Hall 1997b, 61). Cruz (1997, 21) emphasizes this need for translation further in "Home Is Where the Music Is": "For me, writing in straight English or Spanish is always a process of translation – a duality of tongues that opens up a third dimension beyond actual semantics". Such would suggest for instance that there is room for experimentation with the languages, where the dialogue between them becomes a chance for playful translations.

"Art-This" in *By Lingual Wholes* is all about playing with words and witty translations or transliterations as in: "She had a *frenisi* / A friend in C / A friendinme" (Cruz 1982). Such parts of Cruz's poetry seem to celebrate the fusion of the two languages and showcase the creative possibilities of crossing language barriers. Another example of an inventive play of words is found in *Snaps* in "You gotta have your tips on fire":

> There will be a Sun / Risa
> On your lips
> But

You gotta have your tips on fire
Carnal.
(Cruz 1989, 56)

In the poem, the playful "Sun / Risa" gains a double meaning, since it calls to mind the Spanish word *sonrisa* meaning *smile* and simultaneously it reflects the English word *sunrise.* The wordplay allows a vaster and heightened metaphorical meaning for a smile like a sunrise. The word "gotta" on the fourth line of the passage is an example of informal English that often appears in the poems. Moreover, the last word of the poem, "Carnal", could be either English or Spanish, since the meaning of the word is the same in both languages.

The poems are often interested in the sounds that the letters supply and in the unpredictable interaction of the words and their possible meanings, and many times through the mixing of the two languages both are deformed (Esterrich 1998, 51). One example that Esterrich (1998, 52) mentions as an example of the two languages being damaged is the poem "Hearing Inside Out" in *By Lingual Wholes*:

O uno habla con las cosas
O se esconde de ellas
y ellas hablan solas

The translation through
a rear view mirror

Things the with talk one her either
Alone talk hers–and plus
(Cruz 1982)

As Esterrich (1998, 52) writes, the translation that happens through the rear-view mirror corrupts the meaning of the original Spanish text due to the literal word for word translation with a reversed order through each line. Some words are deleted, some added and even Spanish grammar of the word "ellas" is transferred to the English "hers" (Esterrich 1998, 52). In the Spanish part, it is suggested that if one does not speak with words, have a conversation with them, the words will start to speak on their own. In Esterrich's (1998, 52) opinion it is through the "distorting mirror" that Cruz starts to speak with the words "by violently getting them out of order, out of context, out of sense". Yet another

example is the very short “Puerto Rican Joke Riddle Told in English”: “Can he take the *Can*.” (Cruz 1982), where the second “*Can*” could be read either in English or in Spanish, where in the Spanish version it could mean either a dog or a hound or even a trigger. The poem illustrates the power of languages to be many things at once, much like we as people can have many overlapping identities at once.

While reading Cruz’s poems, the monolingual reader and even the reader who knows Spanish, but does not understand all the cultural and idiomatic references, are thus at a grave disadvantage and sometimes perceive the language as incomprehensible. Although the monolingual reader may enjoy and respect the language and especially the content of the poems, there is still always something hidden in the text that one is not aware of. This is an interesting quality of the poetry and renders the poems as powerful tools for subverting the Anglo hegemony in the U.S.-American literary landscape, while meanwhile strengthening the Latino identity. According to Aparicio (2003, 163), Cruz uses English in his works to “‘write back’ to the colonizer”, because for Cruz, as for many other postcolonial writers, to write “in English embodies the very alienating process and product of colonialism”. It is precisely this “new, tropicalized English” that Cruz uses to “write back” (Aparicio 2003, 163). The poet does not live in a solely English language reality, or solely Spanish language domain, but rather in a reality that combines the two to creative Spanglish, which captures the transcultural existence of its speakers. Thus, the choice of abstaining from using only one language as a means of expression, reflects also the poet’s in-between identity: there is no need to choose one identity over the other for it is possible to successfully negotiate more than one at a time.

Although Puerto Ricans want to learn English, they still want to maintain their Spanish, and if the speaker is more fluent in English it does not mean “cultural betrayal”, but instead only the changing social circumstances of the society (Flores 1993a, 167). The circulatory migration of so many Puerto Ricans makes bilingualism a necessity (Flores 1993a, 163). Cruz’s poetry also changed in terms of the language he uses when he returned to Aguas Buenas, as Aparicio (2003, 165) also

mentions. Where in his earlier poems he wrote in English with insertions of Spanish here and there, in the later collections there appears more separate English and Spanish poems. Cruz (1991, 10) defends bilingualism in "The Bolero of the Red Translation", where he states that "across the literatures of the world" bilingualism is "closer to the norm than the exception". According to Cruz (1991, 10), the writers may use bilingualism to their advantage and the two languages "add to the expressive possibilities of my experiences, which are both lived and studied". Therefore, the bilingualism that so many Puerto Ricans foster is transforming also the cultural identity of the people (Flores 1993a, 167). In the essay "Writing Migrations", Cruz (1997, 118) states "Having grown up bilingually, I now have an accent in both Spanish and English." It is therefore Cruz's bilingualism that makes him different, as Aparicio (2003, 161) also writes.

According to Esterrich (1998, 43), the fluidity that the use of two languages causes in the works of the Nuyorican writers, especially in poetry, describes the need to "carve out a space for their writing or to create a new space", for they constantly find themselves balancing on the border between two nations and two languages. Therefore, the language they use, or choose not to use, "recreates home and its corresponding identities" (Esterrich 1998, 44). When the language then in many cases is transformed and mixed, "ruined" and "forced through phonetic, morphological and syntactical deformations", it poses as a powerful contrast to the often "intact" and pristine view of the home island (Estrerrich 1998, 44). Like the poems, the essays too are often fragmented in their form: they sometimes contain unfinished thoughts and spoken and unpunctuated language, the sentences might be fused together, and often the texts' syntax is broken to resemble the syntactic breaks in the poems. The bilingualism can then initially be seen to splinter the poems further. However, more interesting is to see how it might bring things together.

By combining the two linguistic codes, the speaker then "takes advantage of the idiomatic resources of both languages thereby broadening meaning and communicative possibilities" (Acosta-Belén 1992, 988). The combination of the two languages allows for "poetic discovery and

experimentation" and "lend coherence to a fragmented world" (Acosta-Belén 1992, 988). Cruz (1997, 108) also discusses this ability in a poem called "To Kairi" in *Panoramas*:

> I think of the two languages
> I write in both
> In one I find something
> That I can't find in the other
> I make a little bridge
> I can walk across the bridge
> All day long.

Perhaps the combination of the two languages, Spanglish, is that small bridge that allows access to both worlds with their corresponding languages. Language has also divided people according to a "here and there" positioning, with (or vice versa, depending on the viewpoint). The mixing of the two languages could then be yet another compromise for not being fully either here or there, but in a hybrid in-between position. This could serve as a healing act for the fragmented self, though paradoxically so, since the languages are fragmented in the process. The fragmented language could then result in a more transnational and hybrid identity. Although we might think that a hybridization might render identity obsolete through the inevitable fragmentation that it imposes on it, it is possible to see hybridization also as a positive force allowing new forms of identity to be accessible for the individual (Hall 2000, 236).

All these different facets of language, or in broader terms, of ethnicity and culture, involve looking at New York "through Puerto Rican eyes", which is according to Flores (1993c, 191), a sign of an "awakening national consciousness, or consciousness of nationality". The Nuyoricans then position themselves through those dimensions of language, ethnicity and culture as a "distinctive national group" in the U.S. setting (Flores 1993c, 191). It is precisely the ability to speak Spanish, or to be entitled to for instance bilingual education, that has been a definitive source for common identity among Puerto Ricans and Latinos in general. Moreover, the opposition to bilingualism by many U.S.-Americans reflects in a larger sense the opposition towards migration, immigrants and the unwarranted fear of demeaning of the hegemonic Anglo-American culture. As Flores (1993c, 190)

states, bilingualism and the “continued access to Spanish” have certainly served to support the “Puerto Rican cultural identity”. The interlanguage, or Spanglish, is then the way the poet practices her/his in-between cultural identity, which could be seen as an extension of the Puerto Rican cultural identity in a novel spatial reality.

The border culture manifests itself also in the language: with a “split tongue” the poet steers through two languages, sometimes on the border of both, making a visit to one and then the other. The home of the Nuyorican poet then could be, as Esterrich (1998, 54) suggests, in the language itself as an “unpredictable” and “unsafe” place, but at the same time as a “fascinatingly creative and fluid” home. The mixing of languages offers novel possibilities of inventive metaphors, imagery and rhythms to play with. Rhythm and the language of music is in fact what leads us to the next chapter that deals with music, which is also sometimes seen to be “working like a language” (Hall 1997a, 7).

6. Music

As Flores (1993b, 146-147) argues, music and oral testimony were the most profound means to transmit the Puerto Rican migrant experience from the very first decades of the 20th century onwards. The migrant community vehemently listened, played and danced to the "popular songs of the migration, the hundreds of *boleros*, *plenas*, and examples of *jíbaro* or peasant music dealing with Puerto Rican life in the United States", and such music styles were also fundamentally part of the "'literary' production" of the migrant community (Flores 1993b, 147). Cruz grew up in the city listening to the various Latin music styles in "Avenue D housing projects" or "school hallways or bathrooms", and enjoying the lively music scene full of experimentation and fusion (Cabanillas 2004b, 36). Cruz's poetry is also full of rhythm, repetitions and other musical imagery, which according to Aparicio (1989, 43) is an integral part of Latin culture and community as "a source of nurturance, comfort and protection". The mixture of different influences and genres is plentiful and varies from references to, for instance, Yoruba, a West African music tradition deeply rooted in Afro-Caribbean styles and especially alive in Cuba, to North American jazz and Latin bugalú, or boogaloo, and salsa. This chapter will therefore explore the importance of music for Cruz's writing, and study the ways in which music is used to construct experiences of migration and identity. In section 6.1, I will demonstrate some of the ways music has operated as a transcultural force in the New York City framework, and in section 6.2, I will analyze Cruz's use of musical allusions in his poetry and discuss how music is related to the ideas of identity in his works.

6.1 Music and Community

As Rubin and Melnick (2006, 95) write, the culture the Nuyoricans devised in New York did not only change the language that they used but also the music they played and listened to. According to Flores (1992, 188-203) the "backbone" of Puerto Rican national music were the "high culture" forms like *danza* with its "calm movements, with extended intervals that have a relaxing effect" and the

sentimental *boleros* and *canciones*. However, in New York the musicians were freer to explore, and they played more popular music like *bomba* and *plena* with their "most vernacular rhythms" (Flores 1992, 203). The evolution of Puerto Rican music in the mainland was fast and the musicians were drawn to develop especially many "lower class" forms (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 95). However, as Flores (1992, 190) demonstrates, popular music often faced stark rejection by the advocates of high culture, which happened both to plena, and to for instance jazz and blues in the United States. Nevertheless, the lower-class forms like *plena, seis,* and *aguinaldo* thrived in the migrant communities, for they were "associated with rural life in Puerto Rico", and those songs often talked about the very act of migration, its successes, and more often, its pains (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 95). Especially the plena music style was modified to fit the New York locality, the songs started to address issues related to the city, its "vocal and instrumental styles" were reformed, and also women started to have more opportunities to perform (Flores 2000, 69). As Flores (2000, 67-68) states, for the Puerto Rican community in the city, plenas became very popular "at social clubs, house parties, and political and social gatherings for all occasions", for the "tones and themes" of the plena "seem to mesh perfectly with the collective needs and moods of the people", especially of those working-class people "of Afro-Caribbean origins from the coastal areas of the Island". As Flores (2000, 68) writes, the plena too has that "improvisational quality". Cruz's fragmented style in poetry could then reflect such qualities of the plena, boogaloo and jazz, since with their incomplete thoughts, sudden enjambments and ambiguous imagery: the poems sometimes seem as if they were improvised too.

As discussed, the Nuyoricans were often contrasted with African Americans, and their social and cultural experiences were similar in many ways from "street level realities (settlement patterns, political organizing) to rhetorical inventions" (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 114). The many Puerto Rican musicians who came to New York City to play in the various jazz bands benefited in work opportunities from such perceived "Afro-diasporic commonality" between "African Americans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans" (Rubin Melnick 2006, 116). Therefore, although in places such as

Broadway "racial/ethnic segregation" was very common, in the "cultural spheres of music and dance" the reality was more of a "healthy hybridity" (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 120).

Boogaloo was one example of such "black-Puerto Rican alliance" coming to represent the first real variety of Nuyorican music that became popular in the mid-sixties (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 120). As Roberts (1999, 167) states, boogaloo did not "simply imitate black music, but incorporated it in a sound that fused Latin rhythms and piano montunos with rhythm-and-blues and even jazz" and the songs were sung in English. For Flores (2000, 80) the Latin boogaloo was "both a bridge and a break, for with all the continuities and influences in terms of musical style, the boogaloo diverged from the prevailing models of Latin music in significant ways". In boogaloo, too, improvisation was an essential part, and the songs were often fragmented in the way that different sounds, emotions and "short musical phrases" formed a kind of "patchwork of noices" (Flores 2000, 81-82). The typical form of a boogaloo song included varying tempos and musical modes, but the recurring buildups of energy also provided some structure (Flores 2000, 100). In the songs one could witness the "years of the 1960s counterculture, … psychedelic drugs, and sexual liberation" (Flores 2000, 100). Drugs also have a visible presence in Cruz's first collection *Snaps*, where music and hallucination often blend into bizarre imagery, as seen in "Cocaine Galore I":

> BLAH SHA BLAH BALA
> kingsize smoke/ out of space/brooklyn bums
> pickpocket thru the crowd/big fire of bright
> ness brings day/ darkness/darkness/ & the iron
> horse/kicking in loudly/ outside/dark/dark life/
> the ladies of the boogaloo going by in hands/or
> out of hands/in slow steps going by to cabs or
> subways/the corners full with wide-eyed zombies
> (Cruz 1968, 21)

Boogaloo also became an immensely popular dance in the mid 60s in cities like New York and Chicago (Flores 2000, 92). According to Cruz, the Latin boogaloo "emerged out of a reality that existed in the city; it was culture turned into song and music" (Cabanillas 2004b, 36). In Cruz's earlier

poetry, boogaloo is present in its "choppy, fast images" that are "like a volcanic eruption in the middle of urabanity" (Cabanillas 2004b, 37).

Flores (2000, 82) describes the effect of the boogaloo song aptly as a "collective celebration, gleeful partying where boundaries are set not so much by national and ethnic affiliation, or even language or formalized dance movements but by participation in that special moment of inclusive ceremony". Boogaloo then managed to bring people together regardless of their background, and with the varying styles, boogaloo made it easy for "both the Latino and the African American publics" to be interested in the music (Flores 2000, 88). Moreover, the flow of influences was not unidirectional, since boogaloo in turn served to inspire also African American popular music styles (Rubin and Melnick 2006, 120). At that time, as Rubin and Melnick (2006, 121) write, the Puerto Ricans were helping to "reframe the concept of 'crossover' altogether: it was becoming more and more difficult to separate out strands of popular culture to identify them by race or national origin". Therefore, the cross-cultural nature of Latin boogaloo could be seen as an apt metaphor for the cross-cultural realities of the migrants. In such a way, the Nuyorican musicians and poets together were challenging the idea of Puerto Ricans and African Americans being linked together by the notion of "culture of poverty" and instead creating a new way of connecting them together: lively and popular music.

Boogaloo was a rather short-lived phenomenon in the city, as Roberts (1999, 167) writes. However, after the boogaloo craze the Nuyorican music scene became vivid with different forms of salsa (Flores 2000, 112). Salsa music is also a typical example of the cross-cultural nature of Latino culture, having "its roots in the Afro-Caribbean styles", in the Cuban son, cha-cha-cha, guaracha and mambo, and Puerto Rican *bomba* and *plena*, and being born in the barrios of New York City, as Cruz (1991, 95-100) writes in his essay "Salsa as a Cultural Root", an essay that recounts the various turns of Latin music in New York starting from the 50s. Thus, as Martínez (2006, 38) calls it, salsa is a "transcultural phenomenon" that is born from the various displacements starting with the

"displacement of Africans in the Caribbean" and their musical interaction with the "Spanish and Indigenous cultures" and then ending with the "displacement of Latinos from various countries", who then in the United States "create, or rather neoculturate, salsa". Cruz (1991, 97) describes salsa giving a "sensation of a kaleidoscope, a huge mandala turning" as "the rhythm and melody churns". According to Aparicio (1989, 44-45), salsa in a similar manner to Nuyorican poetry portrays "forms of cultural resistance to anglification". Although it incorporates many music styles like jazz and blues that are related to English language, the lyrics of salsa still continue to be mostly in Spanish (Aparicio 1989, 45). As Cruz (1991, 99) maintains, salsa's popularity too is explained by its nature to incorporate many different influences into one style: "it contains something for everybody". Throughout the U.S. salsa has also evolved into many different regional varieties, for instance the salsa played and danced in Los Angeles is different from the kind found in New York City (Aparicio 1989, 47). Many salsa musicians have also widened their repertoire with rap influences following the popularity of hip hop and rap music since the 1970s, and through rap music the Puerto Ricans and African Americans also continued their common dialogue in music (Flores 2000, 112). Moreover, by the 90s, rap music "had finally broken the language barrier" and Spanish lyrics were gaining popularity also in Latino rap music in the United States (Flores 2000, 115). Yet, what is important is that salsa, as Aparicio (1989, 47-48) states, has become "a vehicle of cultural resistance" and "an expression of an interethnicity and panhispanism", thus, it is another important counterhegemonic means for the Nuyoricans and other Latinos to maintain, evolve and create their culture.

6.2 "Home Is Where the Music Is"

Music in Cruz's poetry is not only present in the obvious musical dynamics like the rhythms and polyrhythms of the lines but also in the thematising of different styles of music and the direct references to Nuyorican or Puerto Rican musicians and instruments. Many poems also concentrate on illustrating the atmosphere, feelings and emotions connected to those situations where music is

played, listened to or danced to, and music is obviously a great source of comfort and communality for the migrant in the city.

The presence of music is especially strong in Cruz's first poetry collection, *Snaps* (1968). According to Cabanillas (2004a, 16), *Snaps* serves as a manifestation of the music scene in New York City in the 60s, and successfully demonstrates what was happening in Latin music in that era. The poems address especially Latin boogaloo in their erratic and jumpy form, and make direct references to the important musicians and venues of the time, as in for instance "latin & soul" dedicated to one of the popular boogaloo musicians of the time, Joe Bataan. In the poem, the musical instruments are personified to communicate with the people: a trombone is "speaking to you", and the piano "is talking to you", suggesting a strong connection between the music and the people (Cruz 1968, 67-69). The frantic dancers in the poem transcend reality:

> dancers they are dancing falling
> out that space made for dancing
> …
> thru universes
> leaning-moving
> we are traveling
> (Cruz 1968, 67)

The playing of music and dancing to it allows for traveling through time and space, they serve as an escape from the reality and therefore as means of letting go and living in the moment. Such could be seen as a very cathartic experience in a migrant's life that often includes dealing with many uncertainties and marginalization in the society. Moreover, there is yet again a reference to traveling, which is the predominant condition of the migrant, moving from one place to another.

Another poem in *Snaps*, "Free Spirit", dedicated to a Latin jazz musician Ray Barretto, seems to imitate in its rhythms the celebrated musician's beating of the drums. The poem demands on many occasions that one should "listen" and "watch" the "soul drummer" making his own decisions in music like a free spirit or "espiritu libre" (Cruz 1968 71-72). The poem is filled with onomatopoeia resembling music like "sha / sha / sha", "wha / wha" that transform the poem into a musical piece

(Cruz 1968 71-72). Repetitions as the ones in the following passage are frequent and enforce the rhythmicity of the poem:

> O so many dancing
> O so many dancing
> shooting their heads
> shooting stories
> shooting
> (Cruz 1968, 73)

The poem is whirling into those bursts of music and frantic dancing, where people shake their heads in the rhythm of the stories and explosions of music. The speaker of the poem is immensely insistent of the importance of the music:

> bleeding your eyes closed
> eyes closed bleedy conga
> listen
> listen
> hear.hear.hear.
> everything
> (Cruz 1968, 72)

The repetitions, the visual form of the poem, its punctuation and insistence on living with one's eyes closed in the music, all point towards a devoted enthusiasm towards music and its power to move people both physically and mentally. The poem suggests a freedom to express, create and improvise, both in music and in poetry. The music insinuates a certain community and togetherness where "the piano plays our memories / our dreams our loves", thus serving as a binding force for the members of the community (Cruz 1968, 73). In a similar manner, "Energy" in *Snaps* seems to be all about the raw energy of music and culture with the drums of "ray barrette / banging away", with food like "red beans" and Puerto Rican "mofongo", and music and culture that "steam out of the / radio", where Johnny Pacheco plays his instrument with "bleeding / blue lips" (Cruz 1968, 61). The poem celebrates the power of cultural emblems ranging from the culinary to the musical as sources of energy and closeness in the speaker's community.

Many times, in Cruz's poetry the music is somehow seen to come from the island, which is full of sound even in the more mundane sense. The island's soundscape is constant noise, produced by

the animals and people alike, as seen in "The Bolero of Red Translation": "People came in and out of wooden doors, sometimes singing or voicing the sayings and proverbs of the age. Chickens and roosters made their lives under and above the houses, and they added their own Cucurus to the program of emitting sounds" (1991, 4). In "Home Is Where the Music Is" the sounds of the environment become their own kind of music with the plural voices from the nature: "At night under the mosquito nets the world was a kaleidoscope of sounds, insects, dogs, the dance of trees like layers in the wind" (Cruz 1997, 12). "Machito" in *Seeds*, which alludes to one of the most influential Latin jazz musicians, also highlights the way in which Puerto Rico is the home of tropical sound. Cruz describes how the musician is able to combine "elements like a tropical forest" or "a whole landscape in motion" that follow "the two clave sticks" in his music (Cruz 2001, 264). The island is the locality, where the Afro-Caribbean beats are found and from where the rhythm is brought to the city, where the "buildings were maracas" and where in the music one could taste "the flavor / of black beans" (Cruz 2001, 265). The musician is presented in the poem as immensely talented, which is seen in the following passage:

> Is there a tree that would not uproot
> itself in Cuba or Puerto Rico
> To be the handles of the maracas in his palms?
> (Cruz 2001, 264)

As Aparicio (1989, 48) writes, there is "a tendency to mythify musicians and composers" in the Nuyorican poetry, which is also apparent in the previous passage. Those musicians serve as "cultural heroes" or as "healers in the contemporary society", uniting the community with their work (Aparicio 1989, 48). Moreover, at the end of the poem "Machito" a powerful metaphor appears, which describes the music's ability to bring together multiple sources of imagination, from different locations:

> He shifted geographies,
> while deep in the earth
> The rhythm
> bongo
> Stays the same
> (Cruz 2001, 265)

Simultaneously, however, the rhythm at the base, the drumming, remains as the source of continuity: it "Stays the same". Similarly, in "Home Is Where the Music Is", the comforting resonance of the bolero stays with the poet regardless of geographical dislocations: "In the dark of night the silence was broken by guitar strings and harmonic voices in bolero; those songs' lyrics have stayed with me through all metamorphoses of regions and climates" (Cruz 1997, 13). Thus, those songs and music representing the Puerto Rican cultural landscape are brought from the island to remain as sources of comfort and remembrance in the new environment. There in the cold urbanity, music is seen to epitomize homeliness, as in "The Bolero of the Red Translation" where the radio becomes metaphorically the heater, a symbol of homeliness and coziness emanating warmth: "The Spanish radio station was the heater" that played the songs of the past and present (Cruz 1991, 6). In this way, the radio playing the consoling Spanish songs both maintains the island culture, or "songs of the past", as well as distributing the Nuyorican tradition, or those songs that are "present" (Cruz 1991, 6).

As an example of how profound the musical imagery in Cruz's poetry often is, one of his poems, "Two Guitars" in *By Lingual Wholes*, will now be analysed more thoroughly. In this poem, the interplay of rhythm of the lines and the actual content is very interesting, and the poem serves as a good example of the way Cruz uses music in his poetry. Although "Two Guitars" is written in free verse and thus does not follow any metrical organization that would dictate its rhythm, the poem's thematic form arguably creates a rhythm that reinforces its abundant musical imagery. The poem's visual form is quite simple: the poem consists of a single stanza with 36 lines. As already mentioned, the poem does not follow any metrical organization and thus the length and stress patterns of the lines seem to be arbitrary. However, since the lines are mostly longer than five syllables, the two lines with only three syllables stand out: "With passion" and "Chicken soup" (Cruz 1982). Those two lines also mark tonal shifts in the poem, where the speaker of the poem changes to the guitars that are given a voice. In the poem, two guitars that are left in a room engage in a conversation: "In this solitude they

started talking to each other" (Cruz 1982). Moreover, the guitars are personified, they were "left in a room all alone" and "sat on different corners", as if they were animate beings instead of mere objects or musical instruments (Cruz 1982). The other guitar is played by a man "who has no heart", and therefore his strings are "tight and full of tears" (Cruz 1982). Meanwhile, the other guitar has lived in the lively music scene in New York and has been played by those famous artists, who perhaps then have more heart than the owner of the other guitar. The personification of the guitars intensifies the importance of music, since even the instruments seem to have human emotions and they actively express their feelings. Music is portrayed as a source of community and strength in the form of the other guitar played in the different locations of the city.

Aparicio (1989, 44) argues that the salsa tradition is an "ethnic marker for Latinos in the United States" and thus "analogous to Nuyorican poetry" in that they both arise from the urban condition and share a specific "raw language, and an anti-intellectual, anti-aesthetic stylistic posture". According to Aparicio (1989, 44), salsa challenges the "lyrical style of traditional boleros" with its "violence and diction of the lyrics, coupled with the harsh sounds of the brass section". Therefore, salsa translates into the poetry as "a refusal to follow the lyrical modes of literature" (Aparicio 1989, 44). The form of the "Two Guitars", which is written in free verse and layered with fragmentation, thus deviating from traditional lyrical forms, would perhaps represent such a refusal. However, the final lines of the poem explicitly refer to a bolero in connection with a resonance left in the air. A bolero is performed in a moderate tempo and accompanied by guitars and the lyrics often revolve around sentimental themes, or as Cruz sees it, it is "a song of sadness", "a lament" about "a love that has been lost" (Cabanillas 2004b, 37). Moreover, the famous Mexican-Puerto Rican Trio Los Panchos especially known for romantic ballads and boleros, whom Cruz mentions in an interview with Cabanillas (2004b, 36), also appears in the poem: "In 1944 New York / When the Trio Los Panchos started / With Mexican & Puerto Rican birds" (Cruz 1982). The mentioning of the Trio is, moreover, yet another example of Cruz's habit of making direct references to popular artists in his works. The

poem's imagery is also tightly connected to sentiment and emotion, however, not in raw language or in an anti-intellectual way like in many salsa songs. Thus, although the form of the poem might suggest a break from tradition and guide the reader into a more revolutionary direction like the salsa tradition, the presence of a bolero and the famous trio and the rather lyrical and beautiful imagery evoke a calmer approach than the modes of the salsa. Yet, the emotions that are portrayed are not minor or completely serene, since the poem employs many powerful metaphors:

> Because a song is a mountain put into
> Words and landscape is the feeling that
> Enters something so big in the harmony
> We are always in danger of blowing up
> With passion
> (Cruz 1982)

If a song is a mountain, it is something very grand and outstanding in the scenery and the feeling that the song evokes is something as vast and spatial as a landscape. Cruz seems to be suggesting that music and song powerfully affect the human experience, create such towering emotions as big as mountains and are thus integral to a person's identity.

Moreover, in "Two Guitars", parts of the human body are arranged together according to hyponymic organization of lexical meaning. According to Cureton (2015, 85) such organization may contribute to the thematic rhythm of a poem. Cureton (2015, 85) argues that thematic rhythms connect some "strands of discontinuous events related by some principle of cognitive significance–similarity, difference, part-whole, cause-and-effect, physical or structural positioning, transformation, permutation, and so forth". Moreover, although thematic rhythms may come forth on the level of sound, intonation and syntax, Cureton (2015, 85) asserts that meaning, especially lexical meaning, is the main source. Therefore, different word classes are used to refer to different thematic motifs: there might be for instance an abundance of nouns relating to nature or verbs that explicitly express change. The line final positions of different body parts then further emphasize the hyponymic grouping of the words: "The man who plays me has no *heart* / I have seen it leave out of his *mouth* / I have seen it melt out of his *eyes*" (Cruz 1982, my emphasis). Such grouping strengthens the thematic rhythm of

the poem. A further example would be the group of verbs denoting some kind of departure such as "leave out", "melt out", "bring down", "comes off", which furthermore seem to foreground the powerful "blowing up" on line 17 (Cruz 1982). However, there is a pleasant flow in the poem regardless of its fragmentation, which may result from the constant movement of the lines from one to the other without caesuras. The recurring enjambments that tie the successive lines together further amplify the flowing effect: "When they squeeze me tight I bring/ down the angels who live off the chorus" and "The men flirted and were offered/ Chicken soup" (Cruz 1982). Thus, although the visual line ends, the thought carries on to the next line. The enjambments are then a crucial marker for the rhythm of the poem.

In addition to the rhythmic elements, the musical imagery of the poem is certainly abundant. Along with the already mentioned harmonies, melodies, and a chorus of angels, singing seems to be a recurring theme. One of the very few alliterating moments evokes a picture of tropical songs: "Their throats gardenia gardens" (Cruz 1982) The intensely fragrant gardenia grows only in warm climates and the songs of the Trio thus seem to be as beautiful as tropical flowers. Further images would for instance include echoes and resonance: "Echoes came out of hallways as if from caves" and "Resonance in the air like what is left by/ The last chord of a bolero." (Cruz 1982). A cave can be seen as something distinctly primal and natural, which would suggest that the music that spreads from the echoes is genuinely fundamental in nature. The resonance is like a final change of words between the guitars, since physically speaking a resonance is a "reinforcement or prolongation of sound by reflection or by the synchronous vibration of a surrounding space or a neighboring object" (*OED Online* s.v. resonance n.). Spiritually, the resonance may denote an echo of the glory of the two guitars in the olden days. Thus, Cruz's poem "Two Guitars" has plenteous references to music. The content and imagery of the poem allude strongly to traditional Latin music and heritage, however, its outer form establishes a break from traditional poetic forms. Although conventionally such poetry in free verse might not be considered very musical, the poem still has a certain beating in its thematic

rhythms. In the poem, nature serves as an inspiration for the music. Similarly, the identity of the Puerto Rican diaspora is constantly preoccupied by the tropical past, and inspired by the music of the past that resonates with the new hybrid kind of music produced in the city. Thus, the break from tradition represented by the form of the poem also could be seen as representing the changes taking place in terms of identity of the migrant. Cruz might be suggesting a shift from the more traditional ideas of national identity towards a more pluralistic, transnational view, where the tropical past of the Puerto Rican diaspora is present and alive, but now it is coloured with the hybrid realities, the hybrid music, of the city.

Another poem that evokes a certain picture of loneliness, as with the two guitars left alone in a room in the previous example, is the last poem of the collection *Snaps*, "ALONE/december/night", where the speaker of the poem concludes:

> it's been so long
> talking to myself
> alone
> in the night
> listening to music
> that is me
> (Cruz 1968, 135)

Although a profound sense of solitariness is expressed in the poem where the speaker lacks a companion, talking in the darkness of the night with herself/himself, the music seems to offer some comfort. The music is what the speaker is, it is part of her/his identity and at that time the only connection to others, to the world of popular music that provides the sense of community. Thus, many times in Cruz's poems the apparent subjectivity and individualism finally resolve into a sense of communality.

The music is what transforms the lonely streets of the city into something else, to places of lively gatherings and bursting energy. It is yet again the Caribbean flair that tropicalizes the city with the emerging hybrid forms of music. Thus, if the city, as previously discussed, is a place of solitariness, anonymity, coldness and hostility in comparison to the tropical island of Puerto Rico, the

lively music scene transforms it to a much brighter locality. Cruz also distinguishes the Caribbean presence in his poetry: “If a music can be identified with my poetry, always sounding in the background, it is the rhythms of the Caribbean. Given the separation of syllables within words that makes up our language, the poetic form is a parade of rhythmic patterns.” (Cabanillas 2004b, 39). Moreover, as Hall (1990, 230) argues, it is Africa that “remained and remains the unspoken, unspeakable ‘presence’” in the Caribbean culture, especially as a “ground-bass of every rhythm and bodily movement”. In “Three Movements” in *Red Beans* Cruz brings together the three cultural constituents seen to epitomize the Puerto Rican essence: the *indios*, or the indigenous people, the Spanish and the Africans. The poem is divided into three sections: “1 El Indio – Movimientos”, “2 España Spain”, and “Africa – Choreo Thoughts”. Where the first part presents a mystical mixture of dance and prayer and displays its subjects in a positive light, the second section clearly has a more negative tone towards the Spaniards as colonial conquerors: “Conquer-conquerre conquista / Inquisition / Conquering conquista” (Cruz 1991, 72). However, it is the third part that emerges as the most musical one, where music is “a way of being” (Cruz 1991, 74):

> Nature is made to obey
> The rhythm of a voice
> Or the hands upon a drum
> Within a prior consent
> of the cosmos
> (Cruz 1991, 74)

The poem shouts for the spirit of Caribbean music: “AFRICA IS CALLING ME LIFTING UP MY FEET” (Cruz 1991, 74). It is the African “ground-bass”, as Hall (1990, 230) calls it, that is looming everywhere in the music. In the poem, the drums are made alive yet again with onomatopoeia and the power of the drums is emphasized with the capitalization and spacing in the formatting:

> THE CONGA IS A TELEPHONE
> R I N G
> BOMBA PU TA KA TA BUUM
> BOMBA PU TA KA TA BUUM
> (Cruz 1991, 74)

However, in the end, it is precisely the fusion of the three parts of the Puerto Rican subject, the "INDIO AFRO HISPANO" (Cruz 1991, 74) that are transferred to other locations:

> Along Andalusian Spanish
> In Chicago San Francisco and
> New York
> We carry a treasure within
> to cherish and preserve
> But most important to EXPRESS.
> (Cruz 1991, 74-75)

The poets and the musicians carrying those treasures of their mixed heritage are drawn to express and create. Those African influences then fused into the indigenous and Spanish ones are the essence of the Caribbean rhythms that emanate from Cruz's poetry and further mix with the Afro-American influences in the U.S. setting to form new hybrid ways of expression, as already discussed with Latin boogaloo, jazz, salsa and hip hop. Flores (1993c, 188) argues that the writers are more critical towards the "official, dominant version of the national culture" of Puerto Rico, and due to this awareness, the writer is more inclined to thematize the "Taíno or Afro-Caribbean background", and identify more with these "colonized within the colony", for they too have faced racism and prejudice in the U.S. Moreover, popular culture offers an appropriate medium for the working class and the poor to express their views on national culture burdened with class and racial hierarchies (Flores 1993c, 189).

The idea of hybridity or mixing of the indigenous, European and African heritage extends from Puerto Rico to other Caribbean and Latin American countries making it a common marker for the Latina/o experience and subjectivity. Aparicio (2003, 162) writes that in "Home Is Where the Music Is" Cruz's depiction of the different forms of music he listens to, or the "popular forms of culture", and the poetry of William Carlos Williams, or "the so-called 'literate' articulations of Anglo American poetry", that he reads, underline "Cruz's own lived experience of cultural hybridity and post-modernism, not only interculturally but also in terms of high and "low" cultures." In addition, a poem that clearly suggests a pan-Latino unity through music and dancing is "Areyto" in *Red Beans.*

The title of the poem, "Areyto", refers to a Taíno folk dance, which is meant to pass historical understanding from one generation to the other:

> As voices circulate the hymns
> of our history
> From the dancers of the round
> serpent formed at the center of
> Life
> This is Americas Areyto
> This is Americas Areyto
> (Cruz 1991, 78)

In the poem, many famous Latin American independence leaders and writers from different countries are mentioned and grouped together with a common goal, the unity of all America:

> America that Betances, José Marti
> That Hostos wanted all together as
> ONE
> Vasconcelos said RAZA CÓSMICA
> Seeing red mixed with black
> And black with white
> (Cruz 1991, 79)

The poem suggests that the unity of the American continent could be realized by a "RAZA CÓSMICA", or "cosmic race", which is a hybrid race of all colors and origins. Another form of hybridity and plurality in the poem is realized through the intermingling of Spanish and English and even indigenous languages, and with the mixture of different musical entities from different parts of the Latin America. The languages flow from one to the other: "Mira[6] look / Look mira that whisper inside" (Cruz 1991, 78). Such codemixing as the "Look mira" example presents is also very typical for oral Spanglish utterances, when the speaker is trying to attract attention to something (Ardila 2005, 70). The play with the languages culminates to an inventive language pun with the popular Spanish name "Juan", which sounds like the English word "One":

> America sur[7] south
> America norte[8]
> Juan America

[6] "Look" (Spanish)
[7] "South" (Spanish)
[8] "North" (Spanish)

Two America Juan
Juan America One
(Cruz 1991, 80)

Such puns and "'playing' one language against the other" is, according to Hernández (1997, 7), typical in the Spanglish poetry of the Nuyoricans. In addition, the dances of Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico and Spain, and even the Mexican origin instrument Marimba, come together in perfect unison: "Marimba tango samba / Danza Mambo bolero" (Cruz 1991, 79). The poem is a celebration of a transnational identity, which sees variety as a unity, where fragments form wholes. As Aparicio (1989, 47) writes, the popular music in Nuyorican literature serves as "an ethnic symbol which reaffirms a hybrid identity and collective self".

Therefore, when it comes to identity, Cruz's (1991, 9) view epitomizes fragmentation and pluralization: "Our personalities shift and swing as if wind were flying through us. We are many people at once, and verse writing brings us into confrontation with these many persons as we sit them down and ask them the same thing we ask the world: What is it that you are up to?" Cruz (1991, 9) understands himself as a "person of variety" culturally speaking, and he describes the different cultures of the island as a vibrant mix: "All these styles rhythms and flavors – as I like to describe them – are in transit through each other, making interesting brews for poet and musician, for painter and dancer, for scholar and worshiper". Cruz also proposes that through music it is possible to learn about oneself, as seen in "To Kairi" in *Panoramas*, which is a poem defending Spanish language and emphasizing the importance of music:

Whatever happens could be
Put into a song
Little episodes of life
Remembered and told
…
Song is something that always is
And always will be
Listen:
The voice is yourself.
(Cruz 1997, 111)

A song offers a way to express the past, to have continuity with the culture and traditions of the past. It is suggested also that through music one can learn about oneself: “The voice is yourself” (Cruz 1997, 111). As Aparicio (1989, 48-49) concurs, in Nuyorican poetry the music often is seen as a means to “acquire knowledge” about “the world around us, and about the Latino culture”. However, it is also about the “recognition of the self”. Moreover, Cruz’s poetry suggests in a way that music is poetry and poetry is music that there exists an eternal interaction between the poet and the musician. For Cruz, as Cabanillas (2004a, 17) argues, in the Nuyorican tradition the first poets were the musicians. As with language, music too, as Aparicio (1989, 45) writes, serves as a means for “cultural empowerment” by “collective and individual acts of *perception* and *performance*”, depending on whether writing music, drafting poetry, or listening to and reading the comprised works.

7. Conclusion

Cruz is visibly conscious of his position, or his previous position, as a Puerto Rican New Yorker, which therefore allows him to analyze critically the migrant experience and the changes taking place in Puerto Rican society. Although Cruz's works are very personal, they still offer an insight to the everyday life of many Puerto Rican migrants in New York City, their way of living between two nations, to neither one of which they neatly belong, but between which they successfully navigate. The Puerto Rican migrant's experience is acutely influenced by the relationship of the two countries on a transnational level: the policymaking and economy of the island affects also the diaspora. These people do not feel the need to either assimilate to the mainstream U.S.-American culture or fully pertain to the Puerto Rican culture, but rather form their own meaning of a border-culture. Living on the imagined border, it is easy to see how unwarranted the actual border is, and how artificial the breach between the Latino and Anglo-American community in truth is. I argue that it is on that border where the true Latino cultural consciousness for the Puerto Rican migrant community may actualize.

Moreover, I claim then that the cultural identity emerging from Cruz's writings cannot be perceived as something fixed and unchanging, but rather it seems to be under constant change and in process, challenged by the interaction of social and individual demands. The migrant's identity, too, is marked by a break and fragmentation due to the continuous physical and cultural dislocations, still the break does not necessarily have to be a negative one. Although the underlying experience of the migrant is in most cases tinted by the feeling of displacement, Cruz mends his sense of displacement by reconstructing the pieces of his culture, and the diaspora's culture, into a unique migrant experience. The new identity is filled with self-pride and dignity, it is colorful and vibrant celebrating the plurality of its sources of inspiration.

The poems often depict realities of time and place that fall far from each other, like the spatial idea of here and there or the modalities of time, where the speed of the city is contrasted with the slow pace of living on the island. Moreover, often the past, present and the future melt into each other

through the insertions of past experiences into the present. However, although for instance the language and cultural practices like music find novel hybrid states of being, where the different influences mix, the spatial break between here and there does not cease to exist. Since home is simultaneously and unrealistically in the past and in the present, here and there, the migrant's return to home is often realized only through fantasy and imagination. The Puerto Rico that is desired and to which one wishes to return to is perhaps not the Puerto Rico in its reality, but rather a Puerto Rico of Afro-Caribbean tradition, the cultural home of much music and poetry and the home of colonial people, and indigenous people mistreated throughout the ages. Moreover, there seems to be a simultaneous longing for home and belonging and the desire to continue traveling, a schism between wanting to be rooted and wanting to see and experience the world.

Although the imagery of tropical landscapes that Cruz inserts in his poetry are related to the Puerto Rican national ethos, the mixing of the Puerto Rican imagery with the U.S.-American reality in New York City through hybrid language and hybrid musical imagery, I argue, results in the dismantling of the importance of national identity. Therefore, a turn towards a more pluralistic and transnational direction occurs. Moreover, although the migrants' life in the poetry is described by these transnational processes like the circulatory migration, nomadism and movement, still the migrants live local lives, for they foster and maintain links to different local communities and traditions through, for instance, language and social gatherings like performing music. Similarly, while the participants of the Nuyorican community certainly have a certain shared culture, still the emerging Nuyorican, or even more generally, Latino cultural identity does not epitomize oneness or wholeness, but rather plurality, which is also seen as a creative force and richness. The migrant might foster the fragmented cultural identity as a source of creativity and creative freedom that allows new forms of expression to emerge. Therefore, cultural identities are subject to constant change and transformation, they are affected by the past identities, but not limited by them. There is no need to strive for a uniform "oneness" in terms of identity, but it is acceptable to pursue the pluralities of

identity and embrace their creative energy as a source of innovation and artistry. The transformative nature of identity allows also for cultural and ethnic minorities to find their own ways to adapt to or subvert the power of the mainstream culture. Cruz's poetic production reflects the Puerto Rican nationality, but in a new context, a national consciousness produced in the United States. The poems reflect the island's traditions, but they are brought to meet new metropolitan realities and therefore transformed and hybridized. The poems then support a continuity of Puerto Rican tradition, but with an added urban flavor.

In today's globalized world, it is in fact possible to live with plural and multiple identities without experiencing an acute division of the mind. For pluralism and multiculturalism are key terms in the contemporary society, and it is easy to agree with the notion that "earth is migration", and that pluralism, hybridity and migration are in fact everywhere, or as Cruz (1991, 87) eloquently puts it in *Red Beans*: "The earth is migration, everything is moving, changing interchanging, appearing, disappearing. National languages melt, sail into each other; languages are made of fragments, like bodies are made of fragments of something in the something." For Cruz, plurality then ultimately is a richness and as a source of incessant creativity.

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